
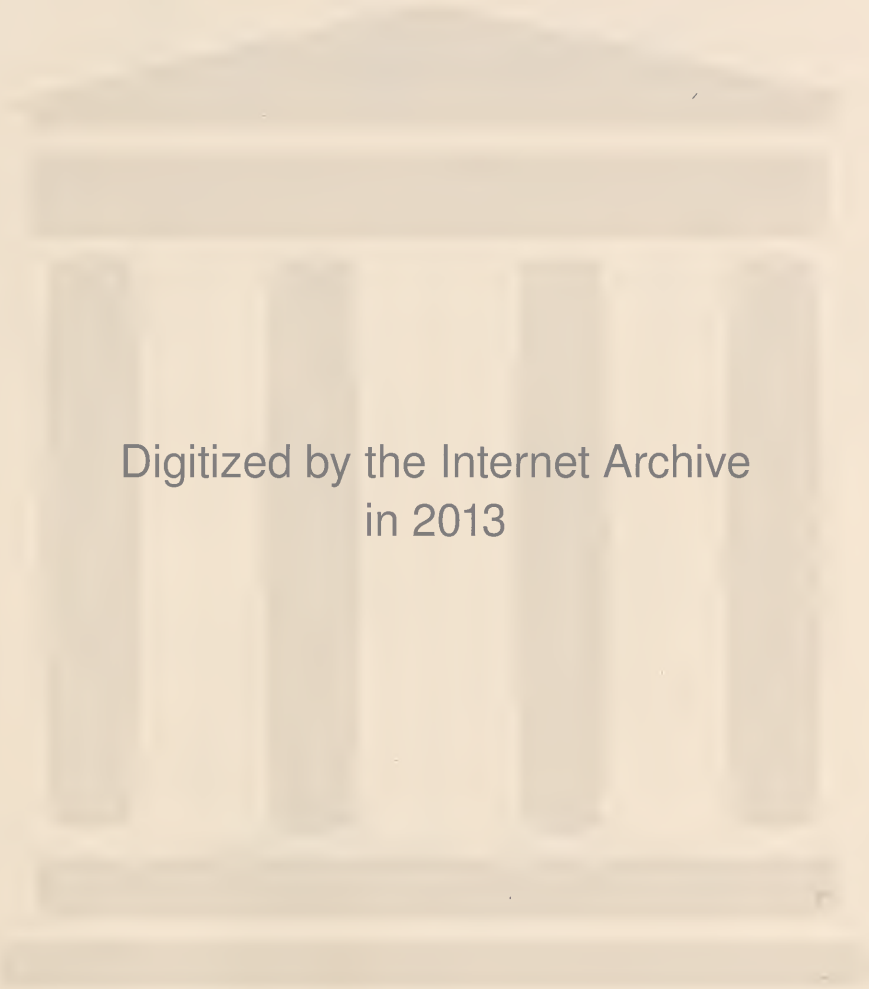


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Luis de Camões and The Lusíads

Les Portugais, naviguant sur l'océan Atlantique, découvrirent la pointe la plus méridionale de l'Afrique ; ils virent une vaste mer ; elle les porta aux Indes Orientales ; leurs périls sur cette mer, et la découverte de Moçambique, de Melinde, et de Calicut, ont été chantés par le Camões, dont le pöeme fait sentir quelque chose des charmes de l'Odyssée et de la magnificence de l'Enéide.

Montesquieu, *L'Esprit des Loix* XXI, 21.

BY

Justino de Sousa

With an Introduction

BY

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with Compliments from the Author.

Justino de Sousa
9. 6. 40

LUIS DE CAMÕES.



DITOSA PATRIA, QUE TAL FILHO TEVE !

Lus. VIII, 32.

To

The Rev. Fr. Ethelbert Blatter S. J.

In recognition of his distinguished service
to the language of Camões at the
University of Bombay and out
of respectful admiration for
his enduring contribution

to Science

this work is

with a feeling

of

love and reverence

dedicated

by

The Author.

Bombay, 31st January 1922.

INTRODUCTION.

Portuguese literature, rich and interesting as it is, is little known abroad ; and the indifferent world even doubts whether Portugal has at all a literature worth knowing. A sympathetic English writer says that to most Englishmen " Portuguese literature probably suggests the *Letters of a Portuguese Nun* which are in French, or the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* which are in English." This neglect is, no doubt, due to the political position of Portugal. If Portugal were an important nation politically, literary lion-hunters would be busy discovering masterpieces in Portuguese literature. But Portugal does not count much in the comity of nations, and consequently her literature does not count much, too. Snobbery, unfortunately, is an evil not unknown even among the intellectually elect.

There is, however, one shining name which stands out as a conspicuous exception to redeem the general indifference shown to Portuguese letters. Luis de Camões, " prince of the poets of his time," is by universal consent ranked among the world's great Immortals. He is the only Portuguese writer, perhaps the only son of Portugal, whose fame, spreading beyond the narrow boundaries of his own native land, has established itself firmly among all the cultured nations of the earth, his *Lusiads* being a *magnum opus* which the world will not willingly let die.

But though acknowledged by all as a classic, it is doubtful whether Camões is much read or even read about. That is perhaps the fate of all classics—to be praised and left alone. How many educated Englishmen can conscientiously say that they have read their Milton through, how many can say that

they have read Homer and Virgil and Dante? So Camões has gone the way of all the others. Few even of his own countrymen know his works at first hand, fewer still are acquainted with the story of his adventurous life. Almeida Garrett, a Portuguese poet of a later day, complains in scathing terms that for many years even the place where he was buried was unknown! And yet Camões is not a poet like other poets, and his life is not merely the record of an individual career. He was a man of action as well as a man of letters, a soldier-poet who may be regarded as "a personage of his own epic," as an actor in the mighty drama which he has sung in immortal verse. His life touched the life of the nation at several points. He was born when Portuguese imperial power was at its height and he lived to see it enter upon its decline. And his *Lusiads* is a national pantheon where all the heroes of his race lie enshrined for ever in glorious immortality. A knowledge of the life and works of Camões is, therefore, a knowledge of the national life of Portugal in the most interesting period of its history. It may even be reasonably doubted whether outside the *Lusiads* there is much that is worth knowing about the national history, and whether Portugal has ever been truly great after the death of Camões. The mighty empire which successive generations of heroes had built up by patient endeavour and deeds of high emprise was gambled away on the plains of Alcacer-Kebir by the fatuous megalomania of Dom Sebastião, a kind of sixteenth century Kaiser, "the fatal wonder of his age," and the country, depleted of the flower of its chivalry, shortly after fell a prey to the Castilian usurper. "At least I die with my country" were almost the last words of Camões, when he heard of the enemy at the gates and of the threatened loss of national independence. The *Lusiads* is thus both a hymn to the greatness of Portugal and its epitaph.

There is much that is obscure and controversial in the life of Camões. Those who are acquainted with the controversies that have raged round the name of Shakespeare will not find

this surprising. And be it remembered that Camões died nearly half a century before Shakespeare, and that his patriotic countrymen have only recently waked up to the full significance of all that the great poet means for the nation which he has done more than any other single man to render immortal. Was his private life as dignified as his genius, or were the two at variance as in the case of so many other great men? Idealising sentimentalism and iconoclastic realism have both been busy and have drawn different pictures, giving us "rose-pink" and "dirty drab" respectively. It may be admitted that Camões was no puritan in his life. He was essentially a man of the Renaissance, and like most men of the Renaissance he was a man of the world and loved nature and beauty and freedom. He had probably a restless and amorous temperament, as is evidenced by his poems, and this temperament, combined perhaps with the injustice of men, led him into exile and difficulties. Driven by hard Fortune from Portugal at first to Africa and then to Goa, and from Goa again to Macau, he led a life which was one long Odyssey of adventures and hardships. "He lived poor and miserable, and as he lived he died," says the famous epitaph on his modest tombstone. But amidst all his difficulties and wretchedness, his brave little heart kept alive the fire of patriotism and he never ceased to work at the great poem he had set himself to compose.

It is useless to speculate what might have been if Camões had led a quieter life and had never been exiled from his country and the lady of his love. Possibly the *Lusiads* might not have been written, or if it was written it might have taken a different form. It seems that the idea of singing the glories of his nation occurred to him at Ceuta, and if he had never come to India, he could not have given us the descriptions of Oriental scenes which we find in the poem and probably would not have made Vasco da Gama's voyage to India his central theme. One critic thinks that if the poet had never left Portugal he might have settled into a great *national* poet, expressing the soul of Portugal,

like Gil Vicente, the Portuguese Shakespeare, but that the turn which circumstances took made him the mouthpiece of the spirit of *imperial* Portugal, singing of war and conquest and glory, and indulging in chauvinistic extravagances and "conquistadorial magniloquences."

There is, no doubt, a strain of bellicose patriotism running through the *Lusiads*, and now and then we catch a note of the crusader, which jars upon the modern ear. It is even possible, as some contend, that the militant spirit of Camões' poetry might have contributed to send Dom Sebastião on his mad adventure in Morocco. But we must make some allowance for the spirit of the times and for a patriot's justifiable pride in the martial achievements of his race. For let us consider for a moment the nature and significance of the subject of which Camões sings in his great epic.

When Europe emerged from the Dark Ages, and the Renaissance, freeing the spirit of man from the sterilizing bondage of superstition, made it turn with a strange restlessness to the exploration of nature and seek for expansion in various directions, Portugal was found riding on the crest of the wave. The national independence had been securely established after memorable struggles with the Moors and the Castilians, and the people were now free to turn their attention to movements of national growth. In the revival of learning the Portuguese played no mean part; but it was in extending the boundaries of the known world that their influence was most felt. To Portugal must be given the credit of having been the pioneer of scientific navigation, and the other nations of Europe followed her lead and inspiration. Prince Henry the Navigator, "one of the most prominent personalities in the most brilliant metropolis of the period," established a school of navigation at Sagres, and from this wind-swept promontory which now became the sacred temple of a new ideal, he set in motion those forces of maritime enterprise which were to open new worlds to the astonished

gaze of Europe. Portuguese ships and Portuguese navigators were foremost in the work of exploring and subduing the world, and the discovery of the route to India by Vasco da Gama was the culmination of a series of exploits of which any nation might well be proud. It is this epoch-making event, fraught with such momentous consequences to Europe, that constitutes the main subject of the *Lusiads*, and round the central plot the poet manages skilfully to weave the whole of the past history of Portugal and a forecast of the great Portuguese empire in India, with Goa "Mistress of all the East," for its capital.

The theme is high and naturally lends itself to a grandiloquent treatment. The poet is singing not of "vain exploits, fantastic, fictitious, false," but of true historic achievements, so great that they throw into the shade the fabulous ones invented by foreign muses to glorify their nations. The poem is a national epic in a sense in which even the *Iliad* and the *Æneid* cannot be called national epics. It is at the same time a glorification of the Portuguese nation and a cinematograph of Portuguese history. All the great figures of the Lusitanian race, builders of the Portuguese nationality and the Portuguese empire, pass before us in a noble procession, an illustrious galaxy of heroes, until we ask ourselves with the poet whether it is a greater honour to be king of the whole world or of such a people.

The *Lusiads* is said to be the first successful attempt in modern times to write an epic on the ancient model. The Renaissance had led to a revival of the study of the Greek and Roman classics, and Camões shared fully in this new spirit. The influence of Virgil in particular is manifest in the construction of the poem, especially in the management of the mythological machinery. It has been pointed out by some foreign critics that the style of the *Lusiads* is not sufficiently poetical and that there are marks of slovenly negligence in many parts. These flaws may be

admitted, but they do not detract much from the great literary merit of the work as a whole. It is true that the poet is never inspired to a fine frenzy, that his lips are never touched with hallowed fire, that he never has the vision splendid, the ecstasy divine. His muse is somewhat pedestrian and seldom soars into the empyrean. But to counterbalance these defects he has many virtues which are not often found. He is a lord of language, and the poem contains some wonderful rhetoric. He is never strained, never turgid, never artificial. It seems that he has so filled his mind with his subject that his thoughts find spontaneous utterance in language which, though not ornamented and highly imaginative, has yet a majestic simplicity, an epic grandeur. The verse flows smoothly, and the style is easy, graceful and mellifluous. An admiring English critic mentions as the peculiar excellence of Camões, "a magic of words as untranslatable as the sesame in the Arabian tale—you may retain the meaning but if the words be changed the spell is lost."

The reputation of Camões as an epic poet has overshadowed his excellence in the other branches of poetry. But he was also a great lyric poet, one of the greatest Portugal has produced, if not the greatest. He has left a number of excellent sonnets, some of which are said to rival those of Petrarch in their tenderness and grace and finish. The theme of most of them is love, which he could handle with as great a mastery as battles. Though he was a lion he could also "dandle the kid." Of Camões it may be said that he touched no species of composition which he did not adorn. But his fame will always rest mainly on the *Lusiads*, which is not only one of the world's greatest masterpieces, but is also a compendium of Portuguese history, a manual of of patriotism, and a guarantee of national independence and of the immortality of the Portuguese language—*monumentum aere perennius*.

PATROCINIO D'ANDRADE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

“Esta é a ditosa patria minha amada.”

Lus. III 21.

“This, this is my dear and happy native land.”

There is but one word which can at once define and explain those forces in the national life of Portugal, by the combined action of which this country succeeded in making a phenomenal contribution to the history of Civilisation and Progress—that word is heroism. It is by heroism that Portugal rose to be the greatest and the most admired nation of the world, and it is by heroism that she declined to a level of decadence and obscurity. The forces that made for her greatness were the same as brought about her down'fall. The strength of the nation lay in her heroic capacity to live and suffer for her ideals, and her weakness in her equally heroic dreams of religious and political idealism. To found a 'Greater Portugal' in Africa and in India, to discover unknown oceans and continents, and to bring them under the ægis of the national Flag, to be the pioneer of Christian religion and civilisation in the East—this was the ideal which at one time became the all absorbing passion of national life in Portugal. Never did such great hopes and aspirations agitate the life of any country as they did the life of Portugal in the heroic hour of her existence. For a century or so this country was the knight-errant of a new civilisation, her sons traversing African lands and Oriental seas in search of new opportunities to carry into execution the national

enterprises of religious and political expansion. This spirit of heroism, discovery, and conquest impelled this brave little nation to aim at building up an empire of colossal proportions in the East, while her idealistic determination to plant the Cross in the shadow of the Flag, regardless of all social and political considerations, made her sacrifice everything to her ambitious resolve to reclaim the world to the faith of Christ. Such a policy, dictated by the enthusiasm of religious and political ideals, was in the long run bound to end in a complete exhaustion and collapse of the nation, for the heroism that leads saints to martyrdom also leads nations to their doom. Where, if not in a heap of ruins, lies to-day the power of the invincible Rome of the Scipios and the Cæsars? Where, if not in relics of archæology, can we find that peerless queen of arts and letters, the Greece of the classic ages? And where, if not in the deserts of Africa and in the depths of the Atlantic, in the sands of Arabia and in the ruins of so many towns and cities of the East, can we to-day discover traces of what Portugal actually was in the triumphant hour of her existence? "The abrupt fall of Portugal," writes Morse Stephens, "from the greatness and wealth of its heroic period to an insignificant place among the nations is as full of the great lessons, which history teaches as the story of its growth. Just as the chivalry induced by the constant fighting with the Moors, and the inspiration to great deeds fostered by freedom and the good government of worthy kings, produced a race of heroes, so not less surely did the growth of luxury and absolutism, assisted by the narrow-mindedness of a dynasty of bigots, lose for Portugal the lofty place, which her heroes had won for her. These are things well worth pondering upon and lessons well worth learning, for the great value of the study of history is in teaching such truths as these—truths which are eternal, while nations wax and wane."

The kingdom of Portugal was founded by Dom Affonso Henriques backed up by the united will of the Portuguese people, who proclaimed him king after he had gained a great victory over the Moors at Ourique in 1139. From the time of Dom Affonso Henriques to the days of Dom Affonso III—a period of nearly a hundred and fifty years—the life of this newly constituted nation was a tenacious and ceaseless war of extermination against the Moors, who had settled within her limits, as in the rest of the Peninsula. And the significant fact is that, whereas in Spain the power of Islam was still dominant, it was permanently broken in Portugal by the martial valour of her sons. This militant struggle with the Crescent lasted for nearly two centuries, after which there was an interval of peace and tranquillity, so auspiciously inaugurated by the reign of Dom Diniz, an enthusiastic patron of arts and letters and an ardent lover of his country and people. The nation had by this time entered upon the final stages of organic development, and her limits stood clearly defined on the map of Europe. Narrow as these were, including as they did only a small territory on the western coast of the Iberian Peninsula, the people living within them were swayed by a boundless passion for heroism, which was in course of time to find an outlet in a series of conquests and discoveries, which seem to be fabulous but are so historically true, standing marvels for all time.

Dom Diniz died after a peaceful and prosperous reign of five and forty years, and was succeeded by Dom Affonso IV, who was in his turn succeeded by Dom Pedro I, the ill-fated lover of the most tragic figure in Portuguese history, Dona Inez de Castro. On the death of Dom Pedro I the royal sceptre passed into the hands of Dom Fernando, who by his vicious life and reckless government sapped the nation of its strength, the enfeebling process being considerably accelerated by his marriage with the unscrupulous and voluptuous Dona

Leonor Telles, a second though lesser Cleopatra. Dom Fernando died without leaving any male issue, but it was provided by treaty that in default of a male heir the crown of Portugal should pass to his only daughter Dona Beatriz, who was married to Dom João, the then king of Castile. On the death of king Fernando, Dona Leonor carried on the regency for some time, but seeing that there was a great upheaval of popular feeling against her, she invited the king of Castile, her son-in-law, to enter into Portugal and subsequently proclaimed him king of the country. The independence of Portugal was again threatened, and the country found herself face to face with the nightmare of Spanish vassallage. But the sovereign will of the nation that was born of liberty and freedom prevailed in the end. The people rallied to the side of Dom João, the Master of Aviz, who was a natural son of Dom Pedro I, and invested him with full powers of national defence against the foreign intruder. Dom João accepted the leadership of his people and a momentous struggle for national independence immediately began. Subsequently, in a historic session of the *Cortes* held at Coimbra, it was decided that the crown of Portugal should be offered to the chosen hero of the people, and on this occasion the eminent jurist, João das Regras, made a remarkable speech to show the constitutional validity of the course the nation was about to adopt. The bastard prince was accordingly proclaimed king under the title of Dom João I, but this made the situation in the country extremely difficult. The king of Castile and Dom João I simultaneously disputed the throne of Portugal, the latter having the material and moral support of the nation behind him. For some time the struggle on both sides continued to be fierce and relentless, but at last the pretensions of the Castilian monarch were shattered on the plains of Aljubarrota, which gave a decisive victory to the Portuguese arms under the invincible leadership of Dom João I and Nuno Alvares Pereira, who has been rightly called the precursor of Napoleon Bonaparte in the sphere of military art and science.

The reign of Dom João I opens a most brilliant chapter in the history of Portugal, and marks the beginning of the gradual unfolding of the great national drama having the whole world for a stage. The hero of Aljubarrota leads a campaign in Africa and captures Ceuta (1415), this exploit becoming the starting point for a series of military feats of no mean order in Morocco and elsewhere. Prince Henry retires to his hermitage at Sagres and concentrates his scientific mind on discovering a means to solve the problem of the Atlantic. Portuguese argonauts rally to the side of the royal Navigator and volunteer to carry into execution his maritime schemes and enterprises. Islands hidden in the Atlantic are one by one brought to light and gradually colonised. Countless capes and promontories are discovered, and the map of the world is radically altered. The entire western coast of Africa is discovered, explored and exploited by Portuguese sailors. The Flag and the Cross are planted among the unknown tribes and peoples of this huge continent. The Atlantic itself is subdued and brought under the sway of Portuguese mariners. Seemingly impossible schemes are undertaken and successfully carried out. Bartholomeu Dias sails as far as the southernmost point of Africa and returns home with hopes of still greater successes and achievements. And then with a small fleet of fragile barks there sails forth the national Ulysses, makes his way undaunted through the storms and tempests of the Atlantic, breaks the spell of the ominous Adamastor, and discovers a sea-passage to India, thus opening the way to a new era in the history of civilisation and commerce. "What are the adventures of an old fabulous hero's arrival in Britain," we may well exclaim with an English writer, "what are Greece and Latium in arms for a woman, compared to this! Troy is in ashes, and even the Roman empire is no more. But the effects of the voyage, adventures, and bravery of Vasco da Gama, will be felt and beheld, and perhaps increase in importance, while the world shall remain." The success of

Vasco da Gama is followed up by a galaxy of military heroes, among whom looms large the epic personality of Albuquerque, who traverses the lands and seas of the East flag in hand to realise the imperialistic dreams of his race.

And when the glory of the arms of Portugal had already reached its meridian splendour, when this country had fulfilled to the letter her self-appointed mission by discovering nearly half the globe and bringing to light hidden seas and oceans, honouring humanity with her work of sacrifice and heroism and enriching all civilisation with the unique contribution of a nation's best, there was born under her sunny skies one who was to celebrate in imperishable verse the soul-stirring and epoch-making deeds of his countrymen in every quarter of the globe, we mean Luis de Camões, to whom the world is indebted for that everlasting souvenir of great thoughts and noble deeds—the *Lusiads*.

CHAPTER II.

THE BIRTH OF CAMOES.

“Criou-me Portugal.”

“Portugal gave birth to me.”

“There are many great men,” says Heine, “who have already walked in this world. Here and there we see the gleaming marks of their footsteps, and in holy hours they sweep like cloudy forms before our souls. Across long centuries they bow to each other, and gaze on each other with significant glances, and their eyes meet over the graves of buried races, whom they have thrust aside between, and they understand and love each other. But we little ones, who may not have such intimate intercourse with the great ones of the past, of whom we but seldom see the traces and cloudy forms, it is of the highest importance to learn so much of these great men, that it will be easy for us to take them distinct, as in life, into our own souls, and thereby enlarge our minds.” Such a man was Luis de Camões, the inspired singer of Portuguese glories, the apostle of suffering and affliction, the martyr of love and patriotism. He is unquestionably one of those Immortals, whom we must take “into our own souls, and thereby enlarge our minds.”

The great man and poet, a review of whose life and writings is the subject of this work, was born of a noble family that had its origin in Galicia, and his biographers vie with one another in tracing his lineage to very distant times in the light of genealogical explorations, which do not establish anything for certain about his far off ancestral origins. It is agreed, however,

that the earliest member of the family, of whom there is any historical record, was Vasco Peres de Camões, who owned extensive lands in Galicia. During the war that broke out between Dom Henrique of Castile and Dom Fernando of Portugal, Vasco Peres de Camões and some other *fidalgos*, who were not well disposed towards the Castilian sovereign, espoused the cause of the Portuguese king and migrated into Portugal, where they settled for good. These *fidalgos* were well received by Dom Fernando, who in more ways than one made a generous return for the service they rendered to him and to his cause. To Vasco Peres de Camões, in particular, the Portuguese king allotted some extensive lands to make good the loss he had suffered by abandoning his possessions in Castile. We have already seen in the previous chapter that Dom Fernando died without leaving any male issue, and that his only daughter Dona Beatriz was given in marriage to Dom João, who had succeeded to the throne of Castile. On the death of Dom Fernando a fierce war of succession broke out between Castile and Portugal, Dom João putting in his claim to the Portuguese throne by right of his wife. During this struggle Vasco Peres de Camões espoused the cause of Dona Leonor Telles, and consequently of the Castilian king, whose claims she supported, and it is said he lost his life in the battle of Aljubarrota, which ended in a decisive victory for the Portuguese arms.

Vasco Peres de Camões was married to a daughter of Gonçalo Tenreiro, who served in different capacities under two successive Portuguese kings, Dom Fernando and Dom João I, and had three children, namely, Gonçalo Vaz de Camões, João Vaz de Camões and Constança Peres de Camões. The second of these, João Vaz de Camões, married Ignez Gomes da Silva, a daughter of Jorge da Silva, and had a son by name Antão Vaz de Camões, who was united in matrimony to Guiomar Vaz da Gama. The issue of this last marriage was Simão Vaz de Camões, who took for his wife Anna de Sà e Macedo, descended

from a noble family of Santarem and this privileged union was blessed with a child, whose name and work were to be the pride and glory of Portugal. This child was Luis de Camões.

The time and place of the birth of Camões lie in the twilight of doubt and uncertainty. Lisbon, Coimbra, Santarem, and Alemquer, each of these, on some grounds or other, claims to be his birth place, but it is now almost universally agreed that this unique honour belongs to the city of Lisbon. The year of the poet's birth is another point, which has not yet been established by any direct historical evidence. Manoel Correa was the first to make the statement that Camões was born in 1517, and Severim de Faria and Manoel de Faria e Sousa, who later on wrote separate biographies of the poet, acted upon the information given by Manoel Correa. Further investigations on the part of Faria e Sousa, however, led to the discovery of a very enlightening document in the archives of the Portuguese India House, in the light of which it became fairly clear that Camões was born in 1524 or 1525, and not in 1517. Of course, it is singularly strange that Manoel Correa, who was a friend and contemporary of Camões, could have been so careless in giving the year of his birth as to leave a difference of some eight years.

In his second biography of Camões, published in 1685, Faria e Sousa gives the following account of the search he made into the records of the Portuguese India House: "In the year 1643 a register of the Portuguese India House, of the principal persons who sailed to India from the year 1500 up to the present time, was examined by me; and in the list of 1550, I found this entry: Luis de Camões, son of Simão Vaz and Anna de Sá, residents in Lisbon, in the district of Mouraria; *escudeiro*; aged 25; with a red beard; surety his father; sails in the ship San Pedro dos Burgalezes." This is a literal translation of the original. It is clear from this document that in 1550 Camões

was twenty five years old, whence Faria e Sousa deduced that he was born in 1524. Since, however, it is not known whether in 1550 the poet had completed twenty five years or was in his twenty fifth year, it is obvious that the year 1525 also falls within the orbit of probability. Portugal must for ever blush at the fact that she does not know for certain either the year or the place of birth of her immortal Bard. To us, however, the one consolation is that through the shadows of doubt and uncertainty that hang over the history of Camões, we can distinctly see the light of his great soul, and the missing details of his life do not make any difference to our study of his character, so clearly written across the pages of the *Lusiads*, into which he has emptied all that was good and noble and virtuous in his soul.

CHAPTER III.

CAMÕES IN COIMBRA.

“N’esta florida terra,
Leda, fresca, e serena,
Ledo e contente para mi vivia.”

“Here in this charming, gay, and delightful land I lived a cheerful and contented life.”

No biographer has so far been able to penetrate into the dense penumbra that surrounds the childhood of Camões, nor has it pleased the poet to throw any light on this nebulous period of his existence; so that we are left to wonder for ever how this favourite child of the Muses lived in this world the tender years of his life, and where and under whom he acquired the rudimentary knowledge of the three R’s. Deplore it we must that all the patient research work, done for so many years by men like Faria e Sousa in the past and Theofilo Braga in our own days, has not proved powerful enough to dispel the heavy mists, which deny to our eyes even a casual glimpse of some of the important parts of the life of the poet. In the absence of any reliable evidence or authentic documents, we are at a loss to know whether Camões at any time actually attended any school, or college, or university, or had his own genius for his master, nature for his book, and adversity for his Alma Mater. This being so, the biographers of Camões have vied with one another to elucidate the obscure side of his life in the light of some of his vague lines, or relying on the support of what little hazy evidence is available, and this speculative rivalry has gone so far as to give us what may be called rather a romance than an historical account of the life of the poet.

Some biographers try to argue us into the belief that Camões received his elementary education at the convent of St. Dominic in Lisbon, but the only evidence they adduce is the statement of Faria e Sousa that in his old age the poet frequented the company of the divines of the said convent. That at the sunset of his life Camões sought friendly intercourse with the Dominican fathers, who were his neighbours, is exceedingly probable, but that this little circumstance should be accepted as sufficient evidence to conclude that the poet learnt his first lessons at the said convent is singularly bad logic. Faria e Sousa has also committed himself to the statement that in the declining years of his life the immortal singer of the *Lusiads* attended theological classes at the Dominican institution above referred to, obviously to seek some diversion and pastime, and perhaps religious comfort, in the most afflicted and tragic period of his existence. But this statement has been exploited by some to such an extent that they would have us believe that in his youth Camões showed a natural bent for theology.

The works of Camões, however, prove that even in the midst of misfortunes and great vicissitudes of life, the activity of his mind was never arrested by theological preoccupations of any kind. How, then, could it be so at a time when he courted his native nymphs, communed with the mundane goddesses of the classic ages, and wrote verses the burden of which was his love for ethereal sweethearts? Of course, we can have no hesitation in believing that the poet devoted some of his time to the science of theology, not because it had any invincible fascination for his mind, but because, as a man of genius, he was expected to give a universal character to his education. No attempt, however, has been made in the above lines to suggest or insinuate that Camões was an unbeliever. On the contrary, it is indisputably clear from his writings that he sincerely professed the Catholic faith, and his great epic sings not only the glories of Portugal but also the triumphs of Christianity.

Enough has been said to show that no historical information is available to ascertain how Camões spent his childhood in the city of Lisbon. It admits of no doubt, however, that when very young he went to Coimbra, and there lived with his uncle Prior Dom Bento, who was a very learned and virtuous monk. The fact that Dom Bento was professionally connected with the college of Santa Cruz has led the biographers of the poet to conclude—what is otherwise not altogether improbable—that he went through the course of secondary education at this college. In 1539 Dom Bento was appointed Chancellor of the University of Coimbra, and it is believed that in the same year the poet joined the University under the protection of his uncle. The vast erudition of Camões, as we find it condensed in the *Lusiads*, seems to have also confirmed his biographers in the belief that for some years he did attend lectures at the National University, because, as they maintain, he could not have acquired such extensive knowledge of literature, history, and other sciences, without the systematised training to be had at a university. We are certainly not in a position to altogether reject the probability that for some time the poet shared the academic life of Coimbra, but to say that university training is a necessary condition for the unfolding of the genius of a man like Camões is certainly absurd. Students of English literature are familiar with the vagaries of those critics, who maintain that the works of Shakespeare were not written by Shakespeare, because the literary perfection and historical accuracy of these works suggest that they were written by some finished scholar of Oxford, which Shakespeare certainly was not. This argument has all the symmetry and fascination of an academic syllogism, but it seems to be too far-fetched to be within the orbit of sound reasoning. In the heat of literary speculation the egregious critics of Shakespeare forget that a man of genius is a self-sufficient human being, and that his own mind is to him as perfect a university as any can be. Shall we say that Plato and

Virgil, Dante and Pascal were made by schoolmasters and professors? We may also argue, to the eternal confusion of the critics in question, that from its foundation the Oxford University has produced a legion of finished scholars, but hardly one of them has so far written any work that deserves to be placed side by side, say, with *Hamlet*. The conclusion therefore is that the works of Shakespeare were written by some one who was more than an Oxford scholar, evidently by that profound thinker whom the wonders of Nature and the inspiring surroundings of Stratford-on-Avon taught more than any university could do with all the elaborate equipment of its libraries and teaching paraphernalia. The fact is that when we come across a man who is called Camões or Shakespeare, we must not try to set a value on his work and character by applying to him such standard tests as are in common use.

The University was founded by Dom Diniz, who was an ardent lover of arts and letters, apart from being a great and good king. We may well listen to the eloquent tribute paid to him by an English historian who says: "The life of this monarch was truly dedicated to the welfare of his kingdom, and to the people over whom he was ordained to rule; yet amidst the duties which his solicitude imposed upon him, he managed his arrangements so admirably, as to have time to cultivate poetry, and to instil into his subjects that love of learning and science, of which he was himself a devoted admirer." To put into execution one of the most cherished schemes of his life, Dom Diniz founded the National University, and, to use the words of Camões, kindled in Coimbra a flame of love for the arts of Minerva, calling upon the Muses to wing their way from Helicon to the classic banks of the Mondego.

Fez primeiro em Coimbra exercitar-se
O valeroso officio de Minerva;
E de Helicon as musas fez passar-se
A pisar do Mondego a fertil herva.

Lus. III, 97.

Some biographers maintain that in the above-quoted lines Camões gives vent to his own feelings, and cite them in support of their contention that the poet was educated at the University of Coimbra. Several critics, however, strongly differ from this view, and point out that these lines occur in the course of the history of Portugal, which Vasco da Gama is made to relate to the king of Melinda in the *Lusiads*, and that in this narrative reference had to be made to the academic status of Coimbra, whether Camões ever had any personal relations with the University or not. According to these critics the lines in question could have been well suggested to the poet by a feeling of national pride, and there is certainly nothing in the lines themselves to show that this feeling had anything to do with personal reminiscences.

The National University was originally established by Dom Diniz in Lisbon in 1290. In 1288 he had assembled the heads of the leading Portuguese Churches and Monasteries at Montemor o Novo to submit a petition to Pope Nicholas IV for a special grant for an university in his kingdom. The petition received favourable consideration at the hands of the Pope, who issued a Bull in the year 1290 to authorise the establishment of a University in Lisbon. Eighteen years later, Dom Diniz suggested to Pope Clement V "that the city of Coimbra, from its delightful situation, and the luxuriance of its neighbourhood, from whence abundant supplies could be drawn, as also from its being in the centre of the kingdom, presented a preferable place for the seat of the University." Clement V acted upon the suggestion and ordered a fresh Bull to be published to sanction the transference of the University to Coimbra, and we have it on good authority that for the upkeep of this institution the Pope appropriated the emoluments of six churches which he suppressed. In 1338 Dom Affonso IV decided to hold his Court at Coimbra, and ordered that the University be removed to Lisbon, but in 1354 restored

it to its seat at Coimbra. Again in 1377, during the reign of Dom Fernando, a fresh change took place, and for many years the University continued to be at Lisbon, where due to several causes it began to show signs of rapid decline. Happily, however, the ruin of the University was averted by Dom Manoel, who in 1495 took active steps to save the tottering institution. Special laws were enacted to safeguard the interests of the University; new schools and colleges were founded and the existing ones improved; and services of able professors were requisitioned.

In 1537, Dom Joao III permanently fixed the university seat at Coimbra, and raised it up to such a high intellectual and moral level that Coimbra was everywhere believed to be another Athens: *Athenas esse credimus*. To the eternal credit of this city, Camões himself has said that it had everything Athens could boast of in her days of glory. "Parnassus' bloomy God beholds another dear-loved Athens rise and spread her laurels in indulgent skies; he twines her wreath of ever green laurels with threads of gold, and Baccaris adjoins."

Quanto póde d'Athenas desejar-se,
Tudo o soberbo Apollo aqui reserva :
Aqui as capellas dá tecidas de ouro,
Do baccháro, e do sempre verde louro.

Lus. III, 97.

Dom João III made the University of Coimbra the rendezvous of the most brilliant men then living in Portugal and in Europe. He invited Diogo de Gouveia, an eminent Portuguese scholar, who was at that time connected with the University of Paris, and was the Principal of the Santa Barbara College, to come back to his country and give the benefit of his great talents to the National University of Coimbra. Diogo de Gouveia, who has been spoken of by Montaigne as "*le plus grand principal de France*," accepted the invitation of his king, and

brought with himself some of the ablest professors available in Europe to serve on the staff of the great educational institution he was asked to preside over. Coimbra soon became the Athens of Europe. The University was equipped with everything that was necessary to meet the highest demands of intellectual life and culture. The staff was a galaxy of some of the most eminent educationists of the day. There was Diogo de Gouveia, the Rector of the University, and his brother André de Gouveia, renowned for his learning and culture ; Pedro Nunes, one of the most eminent mathematicians of the day ; André de Rozende, an archæologist of universal celebrity ; and Portuguese professors like João da Costa, Diogo de Têive, Antonio Mendes, Ignacio de Moraes and so many others. There was nothing sectarian or insular in the University of Coimbra, which was thoroughly cosmopolitan in its constitution. Side by side with eminent Portuguese professors lectured some of the ablest men that were called from France, Spain, and England to act as professors of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew ; of arts, medicine, and law ; of philosophy, theology, and civil and ecclesiastical jurisprudence. Moreover, the University of Coimbra professed and preached the creed of the age, which had revealed to man the secret of the joys and beauties of this life, and made him read the gospel of the new era in the landscape of blue hills and in the splendour of silvery lakes, in the sunshine of spring and in the romance of woods. The sombre clouds of the Middle Ages, charged with exhalations of mankind overcome by ghastly fears of Death and Hell, had passed away, and the world was basking in the light of the new sun that had risen above the horizon of human life—the Renaissance. And no wonder the new luminary profusely shed its rays, more than anywhere else, on the “sweet and clear waters of the Mondego.” Let the authority of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* close our observations on the University of Coimbra. “The profession of classical culture,” it reads, “was regarded as the mark of a gentleman, the colleges of Santa Cruz required

the conversation within the walls to be in Latin or Greek, and the University, when it absorbed the colleges, adopted the same rule."

There is no doubt whatsoever that Coimbra largely contributed to the education of Camões, it now being a matter of indifference to us whether it was through the University or otherwise. When the poet left this city and went to Lisbon, he was an accomplished man in the highest sense of the word, for he left Coimbra, to use the words of Mickle, "with an intimacy with the classics equal to that of a Scaliger, but directed by the taste of a Milton or a Pope." Throughout his life Camões remained profoundly attached to Coimbra, whose recollections now and again returned to his mind, with sweet and fond regret, when in the later years of his life he was wandering in unknown lands and seas and undergoing the sufferings and misfortunes that have spread a halo of divine light around the memory of his immortal name. In the "canção" that is reproduced below, the poet gives vent to his love for the classic land of Coimbra, and fondly weeps over the memories of some love lost, it being unknown up to the present day whether the lady referred to in the poem actually lived in Coimbra, or was a creature of his own imagination. The translation into English verse is taken from John Adamson's "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Camões" and is the work of a distinguished English lady by name Mrs. Cockle, whose initial it bears:

Vão as serenas agoas
Do Mondego descendo,
E mansamente até o mar não param ;
Por onde as minhas mágoas
Pouco a pouco crescendo,
Para nunca acabar se começaram.
Alli se me mostraram

Neste lugar ameno,
 Em que inda agora mouro,
 Testa de neve, e de ouro ;
 Riso brando, e suave ; olhar sereno ;
 Hum gesto delicado,
 Que sempre na alma me estará pintado

Soft from its crystal bed of rest
 Mondego's tranquil waters glide ;
 Nor stop, till lost on Ocean's breast,
 They, swelling, mingle with the tide.
 Increasing still—as still they flow,
 Ah ! there commenc'd my endless woe.
 There Beauty shew'd with angel mien,
 Whate'er is Beauty's loveliest mould,
 Th'enchanting smile—the brow serene—
 And ivory forehead wreath'd with gold.
 A countenance, which Love's soft art
 Has grav'n for ever on my heart.

Nesta florida terra,
 Leda, fresca, e serena,
 Ledo, e contente para mi vivia ^o_{ya}
 Em paz com minha guerra,
 Glorioso co'a pena
 Que de tão bellos olhos procedia.
 De hum dia em outro dia,
 O esperar me enganava.
 Tempo longo passei :
 Com a vida folguei,
 Só porque em bem tamanho se empregava.
 Mas que me presta já,
 Que tão formosos olhos não os ha ?

.....
 Content and glorious with the pain
 That shot from Beauty's radiant eyes,
 From day to day I hugged my chain,
 And play'd with life amidst my sighs :—
 E'en with my fervent war at peace,
 Nor bade the dear illusions cease.
 Tho' still those beaming orbs unclosed,
 For me their fires no longer shine :
 Can those avail to soothe my woes ;
 If these bright beams no more are mine ?
 For radiant howsoever they be—
 Alas ! they are not bright for me.

Oh quem me alli dissera
 Que de amor tão profundo
 O fim pudesse ver eu algum' hora !
 E quem cuidar pudera,
 Que houvesse ahi no mundo
 Apartar-me eu de vós, minha Senhora !

Para que desde agora,
 Já perdida a esperança,
 Visse o vão pensamento,
 Desfeito em hum momento,
 Sem me poder ficar mais que a lembrança,
 Que sempre estará firme
 Até no derradeiro despedir-me.

.....
 Ah! who might guess of Love so deep
 Ere th' unfathom'd end should see?
 Or dare to tell that aught would keep
 My separated soul from Thee?—
 That, lost to Hope, alone survives
 The cherish'd joy Remembrance gives.
 Ah! who might say the glorious thought
 Should, in a moment, cease to heave
 This breast, with fond endearment fraught;
 And Hope itself no more deceive?
 Yet Memory still recalls thy pow'r;
 And shall, till Life's receding hour.

Mas a mór alegria
 Que de aqui levar posso,
 E com que defender-me triste espero;
 He que nunca sentia,
 No tempo que fui vosso,
 Quererdes-me vós quanto vos eu quero.
 Porque o tormento fero
 De vosso apartamento,
 Não vos dará tal pena
 Como a que me condena:
 Que mais sentirei vosso sentimento
 Que o que a minha alma sente.
 Morra eu, Senhora; e vós ficai contente.

.....

Yet softly steals to soothe my grief
 The thought that cheats me into bliss,
 And gives me yet a faint relief
 'Midst all my bosom's wretchedness—
 That in our happier hours, you prov'd
 You ne'er could love as I have lov'd!
 Thus shall the pangs of absence steal
 O'er thee, with half my torturing woe;
 But should'st thou guess the pangs I feel,
 Or should thy tear of anguish flow,
 That tear would but my woes increase,—
 In death alone I seek for peace.

Tu, Canção, estarás
 Agora acompanhando
 Por estes campos estas claras agoas :
 E por mi ficarás
 Com choro suspirando ;
 Porque ao mundo, dizendo tantas magoas,
 Como huma larga historia
 Minhas lagrimas fiquem por memoria.

.....
 Yet whisper'd to the murmuring stream
 That winds these flowery meads among,
 I give affection's cheating dream,
 And pour in weeping truth my song—
 That each recounted woe may prove
 A lasting monument of love.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE COURT OF LISBON.

“Com a vida folguei”

“I sported with my life.”

Some time after his return from Coimbra, Camões is said to have entered the Court of Lisbon, which was at that time a centre of light and culture, ladies vying with men in the acquisition of the knowledge of classics and letters. There is no historical evidence to show that the poet did at any time actually live at court, and it is with no light heart that we have now and again to remind the reader that the life of the greatest Portuguese literary genius, written, discussed, commented and speculated upon by his biographers in the light of the extremely hazy and contradictory evidence that is available, seems to be a romance rather than an authentic biography—a romance which, strangely enough, and much to our consolation, contains the essentials of truth more than do the so-called facts of history.

Granting, then, that Camões lived for some time in the midst of the excitement and delirium of the Court of Lisbon, it is clear that the literary and intellectual accomplishments of the poet, combined with his extraordinary ability to compose songs and sonnets, left him in possession of every desirable qualification to be a *persona grata* in the circle he now found himself in. Poetry was at that time both loved and cultivated in the courts of Europe, and it had long been a traditional custom of the Portuguese Court to admit to its circle men of poetic gifts, who wrote verses to amuse and delight the members of the royal household. Placed in circumstances like these, Camões could easily rise to be a favourite of the royalty and its entourage, and we can have no hesitation in believing that the poet soon became an object of admiration to such as sincerely esteemed and ap-

preciated the superior cast of his mind, and of envy to those who found themselves totally eclipsed in the presence of their brilliant rival.

On his return from Coimbra to Lisbon, Camões enjoyed the friendship and patronage of distinguished Portuguese noblemen and *fidalgos*, among them being Dom Manoel de Portugal, Dom Theodosio de Bragança, Dom Constantino de Bragança and a few others. Dom Manoel de Portugal, in particular, will live in the grateful memory of the lovers of Camões as one who evinced sincere and whole-hearted interest in the welfare of the immortal singer of the *Lusiads*. The poet himself, in a graceful ode dedicated to Dom Manoel, speaks of him as the restorer of the honour and glory of national poetry.

Aquem farão os hymnos, odes, cantos,
Em Thebas Amphion,
Em Lesbos Arion,
Senão a vós, por quem restituída
Se vê da poesia já perdida
A honra e gloria igual,
Senhor D. Manuel de Portugal ?

And more. Camões looked upon this generous nobleman as his Mæcenæ, and has with most sincere gratitude acknowledged the help and patronage extended by him to himself. The memory of good men endures for ever, and that of Dom Manoel has been immortalised in verse by the greatest national poet of Portugal :

Imitando os esp'ritos já passados,
Gentis, altos, reaes,
Honra benigna daes
A meu tão baixo, quão zeloso engenho.
Por Mecenas a vós celebro e tenho,
E sacro o nome vosso
Farei, se alguma cousa em verso posso.

"At the time when Camões is said to have been admitted to the royal household, the Court of Lisbon, as already remarked, was a centre of light and culture, men and women vying with one another to excel in the knowledge of ancient classics and in the literature and poetry of their own age. "The Court was an academy," writes Oliveira Martins "around Infanta Dona Maria gathered a circle of many a blue-stocking: Dona Leonor de Noronha; the two Siegas, Angela and Lussa, renowned for their culture of Greek and Hebrew; Publia Hortencia de Castro; Joanna Vaz, so well-versed in the classics; and Paula, the daughter of Gil Vicente, who was known at Court as 'Portuguese Plautus', and who died in 1536, when Camões was yet a boy, one year before he left for Coimbra. Bernardim Ribeiro, confined to his retreat at Cintra, was weeping over the death of his beloved princess. Sá de Miranda, the literary mentor of Diogo Bernardes, after placing the national letters on a new footing, had in the very year of the death of Gil Vicente retired to his hermitage of Tabada, whence he never came out again. João de Barros, the friend of Damiao de Goes, had not yet published his well-known *Decadas*, which began to come to light so late as 1552." The Court was therefore both by tradition and practice a literary circle, and as such must have offered excellent opportunities to Camões for bringing into full play the brilliant poetic gifts of his mind.

We shall be far from the truth, however, if we infer from what has been said above that Camões, so full of youthful energy and soaring aspirations, was at this time bent upon any intellectual work of lasting merit. The genius of the poet was yet lying dormant, the epic ideas of his mind were held in abeyance by the flutter and bustle of his surroundings, and the call of Destiny had not come for him to rise and enter into the via-sacra of his life, beset with so many sufferings and misfortunes, and yet so full of triumphs and glories. The Court of Lisbon, with all its gaiety and pleasure, its allurements and fascinations, was evidently a congenial place for the romantic frame of the

poet's mind, and we are told that he sported with his life in that light and careless manner, which could never reveal to any one that he was born to vie with Homer and Virgil in singing the doughty deeds of his heroic country. A young man of refined and classic tastes, of graceful and not altogether unattractive appearance, of polite and engaging address, of gay and jovial spirits, Camões was exceptionally fitted by nature to play the gallant and to win a favouring smile from the royal and aristocratic ladies. It is said that he amused and delighted the fair ones of the court, and his only preoccupation was to return their graceful compliments by dedicating to them amorous verses and lyrical songs. Friends, guests, and women gave, and were given by, him amusement and pastime, while "his embroidered shirts and velvet vests, woolen trousers and broad-brimmed hats, kept him preoccupied more than any other thoughts." Such was the life of Camões in the delirium and excitement of his youthful days. "When I wrote verses," said he, when he was broken down by age and sufferings, and was reduced to a condition of tragic penury, "When I wrote verses, I was young, had sufficient food, was a lover, and was beloved by many friends and by the ladies."

Some biographers of Camões suggest that the composition of the *Lusiads* was undertaken by him during the time he lived at court. It stands to reason that in the absence of any conclusive evidence we are by no means justified in dogmatising on this point, which can have no more than academic interest for the students of the great poem today. But every single circumstance points to the probability that the life, which Camões is said to have lived when at court, could never have inspired him with the epic ideas of the profane Bible of the Portuguese nation. Poets are children of suffering, which alone can help them to climb up to the very summit of their ideals. Tears and misfortunes were therefore necessary to enable the poet to penetrate into the secrets of the national life of his heroic country. And, pray, what

can lacerate the heart of man so grievously as a dart fixed into it by Cupid? What can make him undergo the tragedy of suffering more bitterly than the love of a woman that cannot be his? Ah! Camões too needed a woman to break his heart, so that by permanently depriving him of the chances and fortunes of material life, she might save him for the greatest good of his country, "opening to the eyes of his soul horizons never seen before, circles of a world towards which the eternal feminine was carrying him, as Virgil carried Dante, guiding him by the hand."

CHAPTER V.

CAMÕES AND DONA CATHARINA DE ATHAYDE.

Mas quem póde livrar-se por ventura
 Dos laços, que o amor arma brandamente
 Entre as rosas, e a neve humana pura,
 O ouro, e o alabastro transparente?

.....
 Quem viu um olhar seguro, um gesto brando,
 Uma suave e angelica excellencia,
 Que em si'stá sempre as almas transformando,
 Que tivesse contra ella resistencia?

.....
*And who can boast he never felt the fires,
 The trembling throbbings of the young desires,
 When he beheld the breathing roses glow
 And the soft heavings of the living snow;
 The waving ringlets of the auburn hair,
 And all the rapturous graces of the fair!
 Oh! what defence, if fixt on him, he spy
 The Inaguid sweetness of the steadfast eye!*

Lus. III, 142-3.

Camões was preeminently a man of action and a man of feeling. The man of action looms large in the epic stanzas of the *Lusiads*; the man of feeling emerges in clear relief from the lyrical writings, which are, so to say, so many fragments of the soul of the poet. These twin individualities summed up between themselves the forces that operated in the nature of Camões, and each of them in its own way contributed to the making of his character and to the greatness of his life as man and poet. A study of his career, however, makes it clear that sentiment exerted most decisive influence on him throughout his existence, and made him the extremely emotional man he was. The man of action in him was always humanised by the man of feeling, and soldier and adventurer as he was, bold and fearless in the face of danger and death, yet we must say that his was extremely tender and sensitive nature, wherein the elements of action and sentiment intermingled with one another in admirable harmony. In his epic poem, wherein Camões has described so many scenes of valour and heroism, there is a touch of sentiment we cannot resist. Even the, giant Adamastor, evidently the most terrible figure in the *Lusiads*, is made to weep like a child, when he relates the story of his unfortunate love to Vasco da Gama. The fact is that Camões, apart from being a man of feeling, was himself a disappointed lover, the victim of a smile of some Mona Lisa, and it is his wounded heart, more than anything else, that makes him infuse so much sentiment and pathos into his writings.

Like all other great poets, Camões had a soul that could live only on the fire of most ardent passions, and an imagination that could shine only by the light of his own poetic ideals. Love and poetry were the two elements of his existence, and they always went together with him in life, now strewing the path before him with roses, now with thorns. And the flame of love and poetry was kept alive in his heart by the powerful spell of some woman, who was a source of constant inspiration

to him, as Beatrice was to Dante and Laura to Petrarch. It is a truism that the poet is necessarily a victim of vehement and unsatisfied desires, and the influence which woman exerts on his mind and imagination is essentially due to the fact that she creates in him a longing for the impossible, a desire to possess not only her love but many other known and unknown things deemed necessary to that perfection of beauty and happiness, which love proposes. Woman is therefore the everlasting will-o'-the-wisp of the poet's mind, the siren who by her deceitful smiles helps him to penetrate into the Unknown.

No biographer of Camões has so far succeeded in lifting the misty veil, which conceals from us the true story of his amours. Faria e Sousa, who wrote a biography of the poet only fifty years after the latter's death, and who worked with unusual patience and zeal to glean all the available information concerning the life of his hero, even he has not been able to throw any historical light on this obscure part of the poet's life. The lyrical writings of Camões abound in references to some lady of his love, whom he calls his Circe, transforming her into an angelic being to be the stay and inspirer of his poetic ideals. We have no means to determine, however, whether in his amorous verses Camões addresses a mere creature of his fancy, as poets are by nature apt to do, or some real woman of his love, poetically transfigured by him into a semi-divine being. To the confusion of his biographers and critics, nowhere in the body of his love poems does the poet reveal the name of the Beatrice of his songs, but addresses her now by anagrams, now by the names of different flowers, which only renders the mystery more mysterious.

The word Natercia, however, which is obviously an anagram of Caterina (Catharina was so written according to the then orthography), and which occurs in several places in the love poems of Camões, has arrested the attention of every biographer,

especially because it distinctly suggests that the lady of the poet's dreams was some Catharina. Apart from this anagram, an eclogue of Camões was discovered by Faria e Sousa in manuscript form bearing the following inscription: *Ecloga de Luis de Camões a morte de D. Catharina, dama da rainha*. And in one of his *redondilhas* the poet is said to have given this significant combination of names; Luiz—Caterina de Ataíde. Putting all this evidence together, the biographers have come to the conclusion that the lady of his love was Dona Catharina de Athayde, who waited upon the Queen as her maid of honour, and was consequently near enough to the poet during his life at the Court of Lisbon to inflame his heart with a passion of most ideal love for her person.

We know practically nothing about the actual history of the amours of Camões, but tradition and sentiment have in their own way spun a cobweb of legend about this most interesting episode in the life of the poet, and the biographers, out of their anxiety to supply the missing details of their hero's life, have tried to explain his amours in the light of his own lyrical writings. One sonnet, in particular, has been almost universally quoted as autobiographical. In this suggestive little poem Camões is said to reveal to us the circumstances under which he became a prisoner of Love. The passion of Christ was being commemorated in a church at Lisbon, and the poet, together with the rest of the congregation, was attending divine service on this fateful Good Friday:

O culto divinal se celebrava
 No templo, donde toda criatura
 Louva o Feitor divino, que a feitura
 Com seu sagrado sangue restaurava.

At so solemn an hour and in so holy a place, the passion of love dawned in the heart of Camões at the sight of some "rare angelic figure," to whose charms he fell a victim on the spot:

Amar alli, que o tempo me aguardava,
 Onde a vontade tinha mais segura,
 Com uma rara e angelica figura
 A vista da razão me salteava.

The "angelic figure" was probably Dona Catharina de Athayde, who was to be the Natercia of his songs, and who now awakened him to the dawn of a *vita nuova*, opening before his eyes the horizon of a world he had never seen before, but towards which he was now being impelled by this graceful young woman, who was evidently kneeling only at a little distance from him in the church, and whom his imagination transfigured into a symbol of universal love. And who knows if in a state of poetic ecstasy Camões heard the echo of his own heart in the words of Jeremiah, that came resounding from the choir: *Cui comparabo te? Vel cui assimilabo te, filia Jerusalem?* To whom shall I compare or liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem?

That Camões was not happy in his loves seems to be fairly clear from his lyrical writings, wherein he lets his heart speak to us with painful sincerity. In one of his sonnets he bitterly complains of the cruelty of his Natercia, and with a feeling of pardonable jealousy asks her who it is that is engaging her attention in preference to him:

Ah! Natercia cruel! quem te desvia
 Esse cuidado teu do meu cuidado?

Natercia has evidently proved faithless to him and denied him the love she had inflamed in his heart. But how is it that, when she cast her fond eyes upon another, she did not even remember she had sworn by the light of those very eyes to be his and his alone?

Que foi d'quella fé que tu me déste?
 D'aquelle puro amor que me mostraste?

.....

Quando esses teus olhos n'outro puzeste,
 Como te não lembrou que me juraste
 Por toda a sua luz que erassó minha ?

There was a time when Camões basked in the sunshine of
 of the eyes and smiles of his beloved, whose very presence
 suggested to his mind thoughts of a better world :

Quando da bella vista, e doce riso,
 Tomando estão meus olhos mantimento,
 Tão elevado sinto o pensamento,
 Que me faz ver na terra o Paraíso.

But bitter disillusionment has now come upon him, which
 makes him sing the vanity of human wishes. The castles he had
 built in the air have been carried away by the winds, and his
 dreams have come to nothing :

As altas torres, que fundei no vento,
 Levou, em fim, o vento que as sustinha.

At the time when it was spring in his heart, and Natercia
 sweetened his life with the perfume of her love, Apollo and the
 Muses would attune their lyres to harmonise with his, and he
 would sing : "May that bright day and that moment happy
 prove, when from thine eyes I drank large draughts of love."

Ditoso seja o dia, e hora quando
 Tão delicados olhos me feriam.

But now all the light of life has left him, and the day has
 been converted into a night of solitude and darkness :

Converteo-se-me em noite o claro dia.

The moment is one of tragic despair, and under a spell of
 pessimism the poet curses the very day and hour of his birth :

O dia, hora em que nasci moura e pereça,
 Não o queira jamais o tempo dar,
 Não torne mais ao mundo, e se tornar
 Eclipse n'esse passo o sol padeça.

All the frailty and faithlessness of Natercia notwithstanding, to her credit we must say that she was the woman, who in her own mysterious way refined and ennobled the heart of Camões, filling his soul with those yearnings after the ideal of Love and Beauty, which it is the peculiar office of woman to inspire. Destiny had evidently planned that this "rare angelic figure" should immerse him in suffering and sorrow so that he might the more clearly see the way that was to lead him to immortality. The soul of every true poet sings in harmony with the whole universe, and there is nothing, as Oscar Wilde so happily says, that stirs in the whole world of thought to which sorrow does not vibrate in terrible and exquisite pulsation. Natercia made Camões unhappy, but by so doing she only revealed to him the secret of his destiny and saved him for his mission.

The life of Camões at the Court of Lisbon ended in a misfortune, we had rather say in a blessing in disguise for him. It soon came to be evident to the poet that his poverty was no recommendation to him in a society swimming in wealth and luxury, while the unflinching independence of his character could secure him no place under the protecting wing of the men in power. Apart from these considerations, the biographers surmise that the extreme attachment of Camões to Dona Catharina de Athayde made his position unsafe at court, and that the brilliant gifts of his mind, which would have entitled him for an apartment in the palace of Augustus, only exposed him to the envious intrigues of his lesser rivals. These are mere conjectures, and may or may not be far from the truth, but the fact is that for some reason or another, which the biographers have not been able to ascertain, Camões was exiled from the Court and ordered to leave the city of Lisbon. The exile of the poet must be looked upon as the turning point in the history of his career, in so far as it definitely diverted his mind from the frivolities of this life to the great mission that was awaiting fulfilment at his hands.

CHAPTER VI.

THE EXILE.

..... desterrado

Do bem que em outro tempo possuia.

"Banished from the happiness which was at one time mine."

Exiled from the court, Camões bitterly realised that the sunny period of his youthful hopes and dreams was at an end, and resigning himself to his situation, set out to fulfil the conditions of the decree passed against him. He fixed his residence somewhere in Riba Tejo in the vicinity of the Tagus, the music of whose waters fully harmonised with the vibrations of his heart, which was pierced by an arrow fixed into it by Natércia, and was now being consumed by the epic emotions so long lying pent up in it. Seated by the side of the Tagus, which meandered through tender herbage and green fields, and whose waters carried life and joy to wherever they flowed, the poet found himself lost in the contemplation of the beauties of Nature, and by force of his genius penetrated into the Ideal, which was to him a mystic image of his Patria. Removed from the gaiety and frivolities of the court, no longer swayed by dreams of youth and romance, Camões was now thinking like a man and facing the tremendous mission appointed to him by Destiny.

Every single circumstance points to the probability that this was the psychological moment for the conception of the *Lusiads*, which is at once a history of Portuguese heroism and an interpretation of those subtle forces in the Portuguese national life that made such heroism possible. The lyre of Camões was

so attuned by his Muse as to make him sing the glories of his nation with a richness of eloquence rare as it was inspiring; the moral constitution of the poet had a heroic capacity for sacrifice and suffering; and he was only waiting for an opportune moment to undertake the task of translating the sacred traditions of his country into a national Bible. That moment was now come. The exile proved a period of revelation to Camões. He suddenly finds himself both spiritually and morally transfigured. The classic mould of his imagination makes him see a number of nymphs spring up from the waters of the Tagus to communicate to him the message of his destiny. He feels himself unequal to the task, and calls upon the nymphs to inflame his heart with epic fire and to teach him the language of the gods, so that he may celebrate in divine verse the heroic achievements of his race:

E vós, Tagides minhas, pois creado
 Tendes em mi um novo engenho ardente;
 Se sempre em verso humilde celebrado
 Foi de mi vosso rio alegremente;
 Dai-me agora hum som alto, e sublimado;
 Hum estylo grandiloquo, e corrente.

Lus. I, 4.

This invocation to the nymphs of the Tagus certainly means [something more than a mere poetic prelude, since it brings into clear relief the attitude of the mind of Camões when, driven into exile and left alone to be inspired by his Muse, the mist of youthful romance was being dissipated by] the luminous sun slowly rising above the horizon of his life—the vision of the *Lusiads*. Seated in the lap of Nature, Camões finds himself in the delirium of epic ambition. He longs to sing his Patria, her Ulysses and Argonauts, her Castros and Albuquerque, her Pachecos and Almeidas, while the Tagus, his favourite river, reminds him of the selfless devotion and patriotism of those

heroes, who in the face of danger and death sailed away from her waters to the very ends of the world to preach the religion of the Flag and the Cross.

This is, of course, the most eventful feature of the exile of the poet. But the soft and tender side of his nature did not fail to assert itself in the calm and tranquil moments of his life. His heart was not only swayed by a tide of epic emotions, but was also overcome by extremely fine and gentle sentiments. Not only did he contemplate the vision of the *Lusiads*, but he also transported himself into the scenes of his ill-fated love, which had now become the mirage of his imagination. The waters of the Tagus, which reflected the epic conceptions of his mind, also awakened in his memory, as they flowed towards Lisbon, recollections of that sweet and fond illusion of his life, Natércia. Like Ovid, therefore, who called in the aid of his Muse to sing his exile, Camões bitterly wept over a similar misfortune and translated his lamentations into a sad and pathetic elegy, which is reproduced below together with its version into English by Mrs. Cockle.

O Sulmonense Ovidio desterrado
 Na aspreza do Ponto, imaginando
 Ver-se de seus Penates apartado :
 Sua chara mulher desamparando,
 Seus doces filhos, seu contentamento ;
 De sua Patria os olhos apartando :
 Não podendo encobrir o sentimento,
 Aos montes já, já aos rios se queixava
 De seu escuro, e triste nascimento.
 O curso das Estrellas contemplava,
 E aquella ordem com que discorria
 O Ceo, e o Ar, e a Terra adonde estava.

To rugged Pontus, when from cloudless skies
 Sulmonian Ovid, banish'd, weeping turn'd ;
 His household Gods—Wife—Children—all the ties
 Of sacred love, in parting grief he mourn'd.

With eye averted—on his country cast
 No ling'ring look—but still in sadder strain
 Gave his keen feelings as he wandering past
 To rivers, mountains, and the cheerless plain.

He mark'd where nature in her glowing pride
 O'er Earth—o'er Air, and all the star-gemm'd Sky,
 Bade Order's laws around their course preside ;
 And own'd the universal harmony.

Os peixes por o mar nadando via,
 As feras por o monte, procedendo
 Com o seu natural lhes permittia
 De suas fontes via estar nascendo
 Os saudosos rios de crystal,
 A'sua natureza obedecendo.
 Assi só de seu proprio natural
 Apartado se via em terra estranha,
 A cuja triste dor não acha igual.
 Só sua doce Musa o acompanha,
 Nos saudosos versos que escrevia,
 E nos lamentos com que o campo banha.

The Fishes, sportive in the crystal wave
 By instinct guided in their liquid way ;
 The Beasts, proceeding for their mountain cave,
 Confess alike her great—her secret sway.

Saw murm'ring streamlets from their glitt'ring source
 Pursue their path in tributary pride ;
 Saw them, obedient to their destin'd course,
 Steal in soft splendour to the sparkling tide.

Himself he saw amidst the Exile's woe,
 Th' unequal'd woe, that cannot find relief,
 While o'er his verse, soft tears of sorrow flow ;
 His Muse alone companion of his grief.

Desta arte me figura phantasia,
 A vida com que morro, desterrado
 Do bem que em outro tempo possuia.
 Aqui contemplo o gosto já passado,
 Que nunca passará por a memoria
 De quem o traz na mente debuxado.
 Aqui vejo caduca, e debil gloria
 Desenganar meu erro co' a mudança
 Que faz a fragil vida transitoria.
 Aqui me representa esta lembrança
 Quão pouca culpa tenho : me entristece
 Ver sem razão a pena que me alcança.

Thus Fancy paints me—thus like him forlorn,
 Comdemn'd the hapless Exile's fate to prove ;
 In life-consuming pain thus doom'd to mourn
 The loss of all I priz'd—of her I love.

Yet fondly turning, in remember'd bliss
 To joys by mem'ry graven on the heart ;
 I see how transient earthly happiness,
 How weak is glory and how vain her art.

Reflexion paints me guiltless tho' opprest,
 Increasing thus the sources of my woe ;
 The pang unmerited that rends the breast
 But bids a tear of keener sorrow flow.

Que a pena que com a causa se padece,
 A causa tira o sentimento della ;
 Mas muito doe a que se não merece.
 Quando a roxa manha, dourada, e bella,
 Abre as portas ao Sol, e cahe o orvalho,
 E torna a seus queixumes Philomela ;
 Este cuidado que co' o somno atalho,
 Em sonhos me parece, que o que a gente
 Por seu descanso tem me dá trabalho.

.....

If justly punish'd, then th' enduring mind
 A chasten'd comfort from the Cause receives ;
 And Reason may a consolation find
 Which undeserv'd affliction never gives.

What time the smiling morn brings on the day,
 And wasting dewdrops vanish from the plain ;
 What time the Nightingale her weeping lay
 In sadness pours, and tunes the love-lorn strain—

Midst broken slumbers, and delusion's pow'r
 With tenfold force my Sorrows all arise ;
 Steal from repose the transitory hour,
 When others find a respite from their sighs.

E depois de acordado cegamente,
 (Ou, por melhor dizer, desacordado,
 Que pouco acordo logra hum descontente)
 De aqui me vou, com passo carregado,

A hum oiteiro erguigo, e alli me assento,
 Soltando toda a redea a meu cuidado.
 Depois de farto já de meu tormento,
 Estendo estes meus olhos saudosos

A' parte donde tinha o pensamento.
 Não vejo senão montes pedregosos ;
 E sem graça, e sem flor, os campos vejo,
 Que já floridos vira, e graciosos.

.....

No mental joys the discontented prove,
 When waking sense recalls the hour of care ;
 Slow o'er some hill with lab'ring steps I rove,
 And give my tortur'd bosom to despair.

Alas ! not here my straining eye surveys
 The hallow'd spot, from whence my sorrows flow ;
 Here nought in kind compassion meets my gaze,
 But mountain heights, where flow'rs nor herbage grow.

Since my sad Exile, to my cheerless view
 The fields no more are green, the flow'rets fair ;
 Ah ! late I mark'd their rich luxuriant hue,
 But Nature sheds no more gay blossoms there.

Vejo o puro, suave, e rico Tejo,
 Com as concavas barcas, que nadando
 Vão pondo em doce effeito o seu desejo.
 Humas com brando vento navegando,
 Outras com leves remos brandamente
 As crystallinas aguas apartando.
 De alli fallo com a agua que não sente,
 Com cujo sentimento esta alma sai

Em lagrimas desfeita claramente.
 O fugitivas ondas, esperai ;
 Que pois me não levais em companhia,
 Ao menos estas lagrimas levai.

On golden Tagus' undulating stream
 Skim the light barks by gentlest wishes sped,
 Trace their still way 'midst many a rosy gleam
 That steals in blushes o'er its trembling bed.

I see them gay, in passing beauty, glide,
 Some with fix'd sails to woo the tardy gale ;
 Whilst others with their oars that stream divide
 To which I weeping tell the Exile's tale.

Stay wand'ring waves, ye fugitives ah stay !
 Or if without me, ye unpitying go ;
 At least my tears—my sighs—my vows convey,
 Those faithful emblems of my cherish'd woe.

Até que venha aquelle alegre dia
 Que eu vá onde vós ides, livre, e ledô.
 Mas tanto tempo, quem o passaria ?
 Não pôde tanto bem chegar tão cedo:
 Porque primeiro a vida acabará,
 Que se acabe tão aspero degredo.

.....

Go then pursue in calm translucent grace,
 Your unrestrain'd, tho' not unenvied way,
 Till I like you regain that hallow'd place,
 And hail the dawn of joy's returning day.

But ah ! not soon shall that protracted hour
 To bless the Exile in his anguish, come ;
 Life may fulfil its transitory pow'r,
 Ere happier destiny revoke my doom.

CHAPTER VII.

CAMOES IN AFRICA.

A fortuna me traz peregrinando,
Novos trabalhos vendo, e novos danos :
Agora o mar, agora exp'rimentando
Os perigos Mavorcios inhumanos.

*Ah ! see how Fortune brings me travelling far, ever increasing
the woes and troubles of my life, and making me undergo now the
perils of the sea, now the trials of the battlefield.*

Lus. VII, 79.

Camões returned to Lisbon from his exile only to proceed to Ceuta to serve his country in the army : “*para servir-vos braço ás armas feito.*” We have no information, not even a reliable tradition, concerning the circumstances, which either induced or compelled the poet to embark on a military career in Africa. Was he sent into exile a second time ? Was he allowed the option to spend the remaining part of his exile in Africa, or did he enter upon the profession of arms as a volunteer in Africa to break the monotony of his life and to emulate the example of the national heroes that had fought so bravely for the Flag and the Cross in this continent ? These are questions, which the biographers propose, but for none of which they have any answer to give, and under the circumstances we do not in the least feel tempted to rush into the labyrinth from which few have succeeded in finding their way out.

That Camões did actually live and undergo trials of military service in Africa is clear from his own writings, which contain references, though vague and shadowy, to the period of his life in question. It is evident that in the following classic phrases the poet alludes to Ceuta, situated opposite to Gibraltar, the Mediterranean lying between :

Subo-me ao monte, que Hercules Thebano
Do altissimo Calpe dividiu
Dando caminho ao mar Mediterraneo.

Ceuta was taken by storm by the Portuguese in 1415 under the brilliant leadership of Dom João I, and since then it became at once a great stronghold of Portuguese military prowess and a symbol of the national ambition to bring the Moors under the sway of Christianity. Ceuta was to the Portuguese in Africa what Goa was to them in India—a looming shadow of their impossible but withal heroic religious and political ideals. The national life of Portugal had completely identified itself with the crusading spirit of the age, and it actually seemed that the kings of this country were at one time more interested in propagating the doctrine of the Cross than the Pope himself. However, when Camões set foot on the shores of Africa, Ceuta was already on its way to decadence, and the poet, whose mind teemed with the memories of the great and glorious past, evidently looked upon this rapid decline of national power as a visible proof of the vanity of human glory. In the following stanza the poet has immortalised the heroes that fought and died for the Flag and the Cross in Africa :

“ Oh ditosos aquelles que puderam
 Entre as agudas lanças africanas
 Morrer, enquanto fortes sostiveram
 A santa fé nas terras Mauritanas :
 De quem feitos illustres se souberam,
 De quem ficam memorias soberanas,
 De quem se ganha a vida com perdel-a,
 Doce fazendo a morte as honras d'ella.

..... Oh happy you !
 You who in Afric fought for holy faith,
 And, pierced with Moorish spears, in glorious death
 Beheld the smiling heavens your toils reward,
 By your brave mates beheld the conquest shared ;
 Oh happy you, on every shore renown'd !
 Your vows respected, and your wishes crowned.

During his military career in Africa, Camões gave splendid account of himself in the several encounters he had with the Moors, and in the course of a naval engagement in the Straits of Gibraltar he lost his right eye—an incident to which he himself alludes in one of his writings :

Agora exp'rimentando a furia rara
De Marte, que nos olhos quiz que logo
Visse e tocasse o acerbo fructo seu.

“Yet,” says Mickle, the eminent English translator of the *Lusiads*, “neither the hurry of actual service, nor the dissipation of the camp, could stifle his genius. He continued his *Lusiads*, and several of his most beautiful sonnets were written in Africa.” There was in Camões a singularly happy combination of the soldier and man of letters. The sword and the pen represented all the active forces of his physical and intellectual existence. Brave and adventurous by nature, Camões found in the field of battle the desired arena to bring into play the martial qualities of his character, but he emulated Alexander and Caesar in interweaving literary and scientific studies with his military duties. The Muses were with him in peace as well as in war. Military life was more than a profession to Camões, for it was the very complement of his genius, which he had consecrated to the service of his country: *para servir-vos braço ás arms feito, para cantar-vos mente ás musas dada*. And faithful to the principles and doctrines he professed, the poet lived his life sword in one hand and the pen in another, and with the insight of a true soldier clearly saw that science is a more decisive factor in the final issue of wars and battles than mere physical force :

N'huma mão livros, n'outra ferro e aço ;
Aquella rege e ensina ; est'outra fere :
Mais co'o saber se vence que com o braço.

The life of Camões in Africa, full as it was of martial adventures and physical activity, was saddened by the recurring memories of the sunny days he had lived in the El-Dorado of love. The beautiful past was not altogether dead to him but in a sense lived in the inmost recesses of his mind. Natercia, whose love had opened the way for his exiles and misfortunes, still held sovereign empire over his imagination, and now that time and distance had reconciled him, within himself at least, to this lady of his dreams, the one generous desire of his heart was to forget and forgive her faults and to remember only the light that once beamed forth from her eyes, the smiles that spread a charm of celestial beauty over her face, and the sweet words with which she breathed into his ears the first whisperings of love, inspiring him at the same time with the warmth of so many hopes that were to vanish like bubbles. The poet revenged himself against his destiny by re-creating in his imagination the world that was once his, and tried to sweeten the bitterness of his life with what little perfume had survived of the rose, which, to him at least, had faded for ever. He spent his laborious time, as he himself tells us in one of his writings that contain allusions to his life in Africa, in the midst of a continual flow of *saudades*, and these longings of his heart were at times so painful as to make him wish to seek relief in death. Love, however, which was the supreme comfort and consolation of his life, never allowed him to succumb to despair and oppressive pessimism :

Ando gastando a vida trabalhosa
 E esparzindo a continua saudade
 Ao longo de huma praia saudosa.
 Se quero em tanto mal desesperar-me,
 Não posso, porque Amor e saudade
 Nem licença me dão para matar-me.

The biographers are inclined to believe that the father of Camões took part in the engagement with the Moors, wherein

the poet lost his right eye. Acting upon the traditional stories current in his own days, Faria e Sousa writes: "The narratives state that the poet fought by the side of his father; and if this was so, we might suppose that his father serving in that place took him with himself thither, seeing that there was not any prospect of his returning to court." These are at best vague statements, and it is by no means possible to determine whether there is any element of truth in them. Dom José Maria de Souza says that "not any information has reached us as to the poet's exile; as to the time he returned to Lisbon, and embarked to serve in Africa; nor even as to the reason for his second departure from the Court. Perhaps, either out of delicacy to Dona Catharina, or for the purpose of trying new vicissitudes, he took a resolution consonant to the bravery of his heart; and entering on the military profession, wished, as a true knight, to partake of the glory which the Portuguese were at that time acquiring in all parts of the world."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PERIOD OF HOPES AND DISAPPOINTMENTS.

Nem se engane nenhuma creatura,
Que não póde nenhum impedimento,
Fugir do que lhe ordena sua estrella.

*Deceive thyself no more, vain man! For it is fallacious hope
and idle pain to fly what the stars ordain.*

At the close of a period of three years' splendid active service Camões returned to Lisbon probably in 1550, for in this year he was to leave for India—a circumstance which has been ascertained from a document, that contained the names of the Portuguese military men, who were to depart from Lisbon that year to serve in the East. What reasons prevented Camões from starting for India in 1550, as he had intended to do, is not known, nor have his biographers been able to enlighten us on this point, all their patient investigations notwithstanding. It

is probable, however, that some circumstances or other encouraged the poet to try his fortune again in his own country, now that he had served her *braço às armas feito*, and was going to serve her *mente às musas dada*. He had embarked on his military career, as we have already seen, a broken-hearted man, saddened by bitter memories of lost love and disappointed hopes. But it is not altogether improbable that his life in Africa, characterised by great physical activity and martial adventures, so effectively restored the equilibrium of his moral constitution, that he came back to his country with a fuller and clearer realisation of the meaning and import of life. Nothing could now delude him into the belief that this world was a fairyland, where one could live for pleasure alone and free from all cares and responsibilities. Life, on the contrary, with all its grim realities, looked at him full in the face, and it was brought home to him that he had to carry on the struggle for existence like a man. Born to think and to act, and elated by the legitimate pride of his military career, Camões was certainly in a position to realise that hardships of life instead of crushing a man of his character and genius, could awaken him to a fuller consciousness of his destiny. No historical data, however, are available to show what exactly were the preoccupations of the poet, when he returned from Africa, and in the absence of such information, his biographers have, no doubt with excellent intentions, speculated upon the probable condition of his life at the time we are treating about

Natercia, the fond and eternal hallucination of his life, was still alive, but whether the poet seriously entertained the idea of repairing, if at all he could, the broken romance of his earlier years is altogether doubtful. Several circumstances, however, point to the probability that Camões, clearly realising it would be a folly to make any attempt to re-habilitate himself in the love of Dona Catharina, resigned himself to the course of life

marked out to him by destiny, and encouraged by the illusory hopes of a better and more successful career, resolved to bear his past misfortunes with the characteristic fortitude of his nature. This was no doubt the way pointed out to him by reason, but what forces could avail against the tide of sentiment that ever flowed from his heart, and overwhelmed him with emotions that seemed to tear his nature in twain? What could destroy the native springs of his soul, born of the gods and nursed by the inspiration of the Muses?

Camões was *par excellence* a man of feeling, and his nature, though constituted of strong elements, was still soft and tender like a child's. Whatever, then, his resolutions might have been, his mind could never be proof against the memories of his youthful dreams and follies, which had for the first time awakened him to the call of his native nymphs and celestial spirits. In spite of himself, Camões thought of the days that were no more—the days when he basked in the sunshine of Catharina's smiles and, inebriated with her love, dreamed day and night that life was an endless idyll. Dona Catharina, on her part, had ceased to love the poet, and was probably flirting with the young gallants of the court without giving even a chance thought to the man, who, her indifference and cruelties notwithstanding, idolised her still, and fondly employed his pen to spread around her name the sweet perfume of his verses. But what difference could this fact, however painful and real it might be, make to Camões, whose poetic genius had the power to transform the human into the divine? For Catharina held the same place in the imagination of the poet as Beatrice did in that of Dante. Camões transfigured his Natercia into something ethereal, and it is this divinised form of an actual human being that he now idolised and adored partially to satiate his thirst for the attainment of an impossible ideal in this life. And yet the poet always indentified this creature of his imagination with the

living, changeful, and human Catharina, so full of the inconstancy and frailty of her sex. The wounds which Natercia had inflicted on his heart were still fresh, but from these very wounds he extracted balm to soothe his afflicted soul. Love, he says, oppresses him most only to show the world how much suffering it can cause to man, and the poet strikes a triumphant note when he says that he prefers the sorrows and sufferings of love to every other kind of happiness :

Se males fêz amor, em mi se vem ;
 Em mi mostrando todo o seu rigor,
 Ao mundo quiz mostrar quanto podia.
 Mas todas suas iras são de amor :
 Todos estes seus males são hum bem,
 Que eu por todo outro bem não trocaria.

We have seen that Camões returned to Lisbon in 1550, resolved to proceed to Índia that very year, but abstained from doing so, presumably because he felt he had a right for some sort of honourable service in his own country. Some biographers of the poet state that on his arrival in Lisbon he put forward his claims for a remuneration of his services, and "exhibited his face disfigured by the loss of an eye in support of his claim." But the disillusionment of Camões was as complete as it could be, when he saw that his case was treated with absolute indifference by the authorities, while the loss of his eye, instead of eliciting sympathy and admiration from his countrymen, made him a despised man in their eyes and gave him the contemptuous appellation of *Cara-sem-olhos* (Face-without-eyes). And thus vanished the last hope of Camões as swiftly as a summer dream, and he was again left severely alone to face the tragic reality of his life. Speaking of this period of his life, says an English biographer of the poet : "His situation, at length, roused him to exertion ; his means were probably wasted ; and

in the prime of life he saw no mode of bettering his condition in Portugal. Discouraged and proud, he complained loudly of the ingratitude of his country, in the service of which he had shed his blood, and for which his writings testify the strongest attachment." Circumstances made the situation of Camões every day more and more difficult, and he saw before his eyes nothing but the ruins of all his hopes and expectations. At last in 1553 took place an incident, which made him take leave of his country and sail for India without any further hesitation.

According to an established custom the feast of *Corpus Christi* was being celebrated in Lisbon in a manner that gave an objective illustration of the sublime and the ridiculous. The procession of the Holy Eucharist was a strange and fantastic combination of devotional and mundane practices, and was characterised by religious scenes of Christian solemnity combined with the grotesque accompaniments of the pagan feasts dedicated to Ceres or Bacchus in ancient times. Clowns and masqueraders, Biblical scenes and theatrical shows, dances and *folias*—all these were strangely mixed up with the religious practices of the vast multitude that carried in procession the most august and sacred Body of Christ. Here and there one could see representations of Abraham and St. Peter, king David and St. Joseph, while some of the most beautiful young women were playing the parts of St. Mary and St. Catherine, St. Clara and Mary Magdalene. Not to say that there were no religious motives and feelings behind this feast, but the Christian aspect of it was really overshadowed by the pagan character stamped upon it. At one time the solemn music of a religious hymn lifted up one's heart to God, at another the suggestive movements and gestures of dancing girls left him in the delirium of a Bacchanalian performance. This was the way in which, according to reliable chroniclers, the feast of *Corpus Christi* was celebrated in Lisbon in those times of grotesque, though well-meaning, religious practices.

In the year 1553 the Eucharistic feast was being celebrated in the usual manner. The city of Lisbon put on a gay and joyous appearance, and men, women, and children were overcome by the enthusiasm of the festive occasion. During the excitement and bustle of the day one Gonçalo Borges, a servant of the royal household, was riding along one of the streets of Lisbon, when he was suddenly attacked by two masqueraders, and a fight took place in right earnest between the two parties. Camões, who, like everybody else, was out to have what little sport he could on that day, happened to be on the scene, and recognised in the masqueraders two of his friends. Bold and adventurous by nature, he intervened in the scuffle on behalf of his comrades, and inflicted a severe blow on Gonçalo Borges. The incident proved serious, and Camões was immediately arrested and imprisoned. But he was soon released, because "he was young and poor and willing to go to serve in India, and because he had been already pardoned by the aggrieved party (Gonçalo Borges)." Eleven days after his release Camões left for India.

The ill-starred love of Camões for Dona Catharina de Athayde has been looked upon by his biographers as the primary cause of his misfortunes, and this conclusion, however sentimental it may be, has a fascination all its own to every student of the chequered career of the great poet. Some biographers have lamented the circumstances that prevented the union of Camões with his Natercia, and Dom José Maria de Sousa seems to have acted on the spur of sentiment in writing these sweet and tender lines "How disappointed are our desires," says he, "to know more exactly why our poet broke such sweet bonds of love, and exposed himself to the cruel pains of a long or eternal absence! What were the obstacles that opposed themselves to an union with his beloved? What the hopes he afterwards cherished in India respecting her, and in which he trusted, when he lost her? To none of these do

his unfeeling and cold biographers give us any satisfactory answer. They appear to have been afraid or scrupulous to mention, or give any notice of the loves of Camões; and he, from delicacy of feeling, does not explain himself, except in general terms, or mysteriously, as to the object of his passion." But why should we lament the fact that the poet was not allowed to marry Dona Catharina, and that he was compelled by circumstances to go into voluntary exile to the Far East? Who would have sung the glories of Portugal, had the author of the *Lusiads* married Natercia and lived a life of gaiety and ease? The cruelties of life crushed him only to make him the more able to completely identify himself with the heroic spirit of his country. The cross was heavy, the via sacra strewn with thorns, and the ascent to the calvary was painful and weary. What else, then, could make the sacrifice more heroic?

CHAPTER IX.

"BOA VIAGEM."

..... Mas, ó cego !
 Eu que commetto insano e temerario,
 Sem vós, nymphas do Tejo e do Mondego,
 Por caminho tão arduo, longo e vario !
 Vosso favor invoco, que navego
 Por alto mar, com vento tão contrario,
 Que, se não me adjudaes, hei grande medo
 Que o meu fraco batel se alague cêdo.

*But I, fond man depraved !
 Where would I speed, as mad'ning in a dream,
 Without your aid, ye nymphs of Tago's stream !
 Or yours, ye Dryads of Mondego's bowers !
 Without your aid how vain my wearied powers !
 Long yet and various lies my arduous way
 Through louring tempests and a boundless sea.
 Oh then, propitious hear your son implore,
 And guide my vessel to the happy shore.*

Lus. VII, 78.

Agitated by feelings which he himself could not analyse, crushed by the weight of his sorrows and misfortunes, and oppressed by thoughts of his country's ingratitude, Camões decided to try his fortune in the East, and so in 1553 embarked on the *S. Bento*, wherein Fernando Alvares Cabral was sailing to India with a small squadron of four ships. Poor, friendless, and bruised at heart, Camões started on his new career with a mind full of gloomy forebodings, and the only precious treasure he carried with him were the few papers, on which he had already traced the outlines of that superb picture, which he has bequeathed to humanity under the name of the *Lusiads*, and wherein are delineated the characteristic features of the national life and soul of Portugal. At the time when the poet is about to take leave of his native waters, his mind is being preyed upon by cruel and self-contradictory thoughts, while the agony of his heart is too great to let him realise how and where he stands in life. Rejected by the woman he loved and adored, ignored by his friends, and despised by his countrymen, he sets out for remote and unfamiliar lands of the East. Will he find that kindness and humanity among heathens, which is denied to him by his Christian countrymen? Will he find peace and tranquillity to enable him to give a permanent form to the epic ideas that agitate his mind, or succumb to the misfortunes that are befall-

ling him one after another? Will he live to come back to his native land, or die in some wild and inhospitable corner of the world, unwept, unhonoured and unsung? In the fury of his mental conflict, which every moment grows more and more intense, Camões finds himself hopelessly lost. I am at war, says he, with those who wish to be at peace with me, and yet I do not defend myself from such as are at war with me. What can I expect of false hopes, and what has made me a friend of my own misfortunes?

Pelejo com quem trata paz comigo,
De quem guerra me faz não me defendo.
De falsas esperanças que pretendo?
Quem do meo proprio mal me fez amigo?

But time and tide wait for no man, and so the *S. Bento*, carrying on board the greatest intellectual glory of Portugal, weighs anchor at last. Camões standing on deck in a Napoleonic pose, casts a farewell glance on the hills and shores of his native land. "He recalls to his mind" says Oliveira Martins, "the incidents which had brought about his two exiles: the first, in which his mission was revealed to him, the second in which he was made to feel the touch of life in combats and prisons." The disillusionment of life is complete. Camões sees before his eyes the fatal image of Natercia, this fond child of his imagination, who had first kindled the passion of love in his heart and then left him alone to be consumed by its fire. He fixes his eyes upon the skies of Coimbra, this ideal seat of his academic life and of his youthful joys and dreams, and fondly thinks of the Mondego, which had educated his heart and made him drink deep of the beauties of Nature. He gazes upon Lisbon, the city of his birth and the field of his love and romance, and in sweet and tender words, which spring up from his heart with all the perfume of his soul, he takes leave of the Tagus, which stands in

symbolic relation to his soul : " Oh sweet and clear waters of the Tagus, that wind among the fair meadows, refreshing, as ye flow, herbage, flowers, and flocks, and soothing the nymphs and shepherds with pleasure and joy ! I wish I could know, sweet waters, when my eyes will linger on ye once more ! Sad at heart, and without any hope that fate will bless my future lot, I turn me away from thee, dear river ; and my destiny which bids me now depart, converts all my joys into sorrows. Thoughts of thee will ever soothe and refresh my mind, and memory will now and again see thee in dreams, when I shall breathe my sighs on other airs and drop my tears far off in other streams."

Brandas agoas do Tejo que passando
 Por estes verdes campos que regais,
 Plantas, hervas, e flores, e animais,
 Pastoras, nymphas, ides alegrando :
 Não sei, (ah doces agoas !) ; nao sei quando
 Vos tornarei a ver ; que mágoas tais,
 Vendo como vos deixo, me causais,
 Que de tornar já vou desconfiando.
 Ordenou o destino, desejoso
 De converter meus gostos em pezares,
 Partida que me vae custando tanto.
 Saudoso de vós, delle queixoso,
 Encherei de suspiros outros ares,
 Turbarei outras agoas com meu pranto.

The ingratitude of his country was uppermost in the mind of the poet, and as he himself has said in one of his letters, he departed from his native land rather with a curse than a blessing: *Ingrata patria, non possidebis ossa mea*, ungrateful country, thou shall not possess my bones. And yet there was in his nature the undying flame of patriotism, which would in time extinguish all the reactionary feelings of his heart, and make him

say with all the tenderness and sweetness of his soul—this, this is my dear and happy native land: *Esta é a ditosa patria minha amada.*

The *S. Bento* at last left the Tagus and sped on at full sail, and Camões more and more receded from his native hills so near and dear to his heart :

Ja a vista pouco e pouco se desterra
D'aquelles patrios montes, que ficavam :

Lus. V, 3.

The happy scenes of his youth and love begin to disappear from his sight, and he leaves behind him the many charms and beauties of *his ditosa patria amada*—the sweet and dear Tagus and the life-giving hills of Cintra :

Ficava o caro Tejo, e a fresca serra
De Cintra ; e nella os olhos se alongavam.

Lus. V, 3.

The loveliest spot in the universe is at last blotted out from his sight, and he can see but “the lonely dreary waste of seas and boundless sky.”

E já depois que toda se escondeo,
Nao vimos mais enfim que mar e céu.

Lus. V, 3.

The poet is tossing on the high seas, and the ship cuts her way through the waters of the Atlantic, on whose surface his genius reads the history of the heroic deeds of his countrymen, to whom “danger’s self was lure alone,” and who opened a passage through this ocean against such perils of life as might have made even the gods pause and think twice. His heart leaps up at the sight of the seas ploughed for the first time by national ships and of the islands discovered by national heroes under the inspiring guidance of Prince Henry the Navigator.

Assim fomos abrindo aquelles mares,
 Que geração alguma não abriu,
 As novas ilhas vendo, e os novos ares,
 Que o generoso Henrique descobriu.

Lus. V, 4.

The epic heart of Camões beats faster and faster. His eyes feast on the sight of the islands, where the armadas of Lusitania saw new and wonderful things never before seen by European eyes :

Terras por onde novas maravilhas
 Andaram vendo já nossas armadas.

Lus. V, 8.

The voyage through the Atlantic becomes difficult and perilous sailing, and Camões undergoes the same experiences as did the immortal Gama during his triumphant passage across the waters of this mighty ocean—roaring thunders bellow over his head, and bursting lightnings kindle the burning air, black clouds come down in a deluge and dark nights add to the terrors of the sea :

Subitas trovoadas, temerosas,
 Relampagos, que o ar em fogo acendem ;
 Negros chuueiros, noites tenebrosas,
 Bramidos de trovões que o mundo fendem.

Lus. V, 16.

The ominous words of Adamastor, who had anticipated that shipwrecks, disasters, and deaths would befall the Portuguese adventurers in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope, begin to echo and re-echo in the ears of the poet :

Antes em vossas naús vereis cada anno
 (Se é verdade o que meu juizo alcança)
 Naufragios, perdições de toda a sorte,
 Que o menor mal de todos seja a morte.

Lus. V, 44.

Camões is not in the least dismayed, but his heart expands with a feeling of national pride at the thought that so many brave and gallant sons volunteered to die, so that the name of their country might live for ever. What great and noble action was ever done without the risk and peril of life? Who can doubt that a heroic death only consecrates the memory of the hero, and paves the path to his immortality?

..... As cousas arduas e lustrosas
 Se alcançam com trabalho e com fadiga.
 Faz as pessoas altas e famosas
 A vida, que se perde, e que periga ;
 Que quando ao mêdo infame não se rende,
 Então, se menos dura, mais se estende.

Lus. IV, 78.

The poet reaches off the Cape, classically represented by him as a metamorphosis of Adamastor, the Genius of storms and tempests. Let him narrate in his own language the experiences he had in this region: "Arrived at the Cape of Good Hope," says Camões in an elegy wherein he describes his voyage to India, "behold the night is obscured with clouds; the day suddenly departs from the sky; and the vast ocean becomes enraged. The frame of the world appeared as about to be destroyed by the storm; the sea was converted into mountains. The fierce Boreas and dreadful South Wind contending raised noisy tempests, tearing the hollow sails of the vessels. The cordage hissed in this conflict; the mariners in despair filled the air with their cries to Heaven. The fierce and loud Thunder dispersed the bolts fabricated by Vulcan, appalling both the poles with fear.'

Porque chegando ao Cabo da Esperança,

* * * * *

Eis a noite com nuvens s'escurece ;

Do ar subitamente foge o dia;

E todo o largo Oceano s'embracece.

A máquina do mundo parecia,
Que em tormentas se vinha desfazendo ;
Em serras todo o mar se convertia.

Lutando Boreas fero, e Noto horrendo,
Sonoras tempestades levantavam,
Das naos as velas concavas rompendo.

As cordas co' o ruido assoviavam;
Os marinheiros, já desesperados,
Com gritos para o Ceo o ar coalhavam.

Os raios por Vulcano fabricados,
Vibrava o fero e aspero Tonante,
Tremendo os Polos ambos de assombrados.

Thunders and lightnings cease, storms and gales subside,
and the clear dawn of the morning brings the hope of safe
arrival at the desired port, the sun rising in the East dispelling
the gloomy forebodings of the mind :

Depois de procellosa tempestade,
Nocturna sombra, e sibilante vento,
Traz a manhã serena claridade,
Esperança de porto e salvamento :
Aparta o sol a negra escuridade,
Removendo o temor do pensamento.

Lus. IV, 1.

And as the ship takes a turn and begins to sail along the
eastern coast of the Cape, Camões hears a song of shepherd girls,
which soothes and softens his heart, and relieves his mind from
the awful impressions of a tempestuous night. These fair and
graceful pastoral nymphs sing their charming rural melodies
accompanied by the sweet music of rustic pipes—a scene which
makes the poet feel he “sees the sylvan reign of Pan, and hears
the music of the Mantuan swan : ”

Cantigas pastoris, em prosa, ou rima,
 Na sua lingua cantam concertadas
 Co'o doce som das rusticas avenas,
 Imitando de Tityro as Camenas.

Lus. V, 63.

The genius of Camões again catches poetic fire, and he is overpowered by epic memories of national heroism. As his ship begins to sail towards India, he thinks of the bravest of his country's brave sons, who explored and ploughed the seas, "where sail was never spread before," and who carried the invincible Flag of their nation round the entire coast of Africa, discovering new lands and unknown constellations :

Do mar temos corrido e navegado
 'Toda a parte do Antartico e Callisto,
 Toda a costa africana rodeado,
 Diversos céos e terras temos visto.

Lus. I, 51.

Os portuguezes somos do Occidente ;
 Imos buscando as terras do Oriente.

Lus. I, 50.

At last, after a perilous voyage of some months, interrupted by storms and tempests, one bright morning the shores of India are sighted, and the greatest Lusitanian poet, overcome by feelings of rapturous ecstasy, salutes the classic and legendary hills of the great country, which is at once the cradle and the grave of so many empires and civilisations, and hears from afar the murmurings of the Ganges :

Ja a manha clara dava nos outeiros,
 Por onde o Ganges murmurando sôa.

Lus. VI, 92.

Camões reached Goa in September, 1553. Of the four vessels that left the waters of the Tagus, only the *S. Bento*, which had on board the singer of the *Lusiads*, safely arrived in India, the rest having been dispersed and detained on the way by storms. Apollo and the Muses saved their favourite child, "Fate seeming to have watched over him," as Bouterwek says, "for the purpose of conducting him safely through the most imminent dangers to the completion of his poetic career."

CHAPTER X

UNDER THE PALMS OF GOA

Goa vereis aos mouros ser tomada,
 A qual virá depois a ser senhora
 Do todo o Oriente, e sublimada
 Co'os triumphos da gente vencedora.

*Where Goa's warlike ramparts from on high,
 Pleas'd shalt thou see thy Lusian banners fly ;
 The pagan tribes in crowds shall crowd her gate,
 While she sublime shall tower in regal state,
 The fatal scourge, the dread of all who dare
 Against thy sons to plan the future war.*

Lus. II, 51.

Camões arrived in Goa, the *ilha illustrissima* of his epic dreams, in September, 1553, and it is easier to imagine than describe the feelings that must have caused the heart of the poet to melt away in rapturous ecstasy, when for the first time he contemplated the placid waters of the Mandovi, rendered historic by the exploits of the great Albuquerque and a host of other heroes.

The India of the days of Camões, however, was different from the India so brilliantly depicted in the *Lusiads*. The sun of Portuguese glory and heroism had already set, and a race for self-interest was the order of the day, where a few years before self sacrifice was the dominant motive and principle of life. "That chivalrous spirit," writes John Adamson, "with which Vasco da Gama, Albuquerque, Pacheco, and other illustrious heroes, had sailed to India ; the thirst for enterprise, the boast of dangers surmounted and victories achieved, the hopes of distinctions, the allurements of honours to be conferred, which originally tempted the Portuguese youth from Lisbon, had totally vanished." Such was the India, which it was given to Camões to see with his own eyes, so unlike that India, which emerges bright and refulgent from the epic pages of the *Lusiads*.

Soon after the arrival of Camões in Goa, a situation arose, which gave him a timely opportunity to share the martial glories of his nation in the East. The King of Pimenta was making incursions into the territories of the King of Cochin, an ally of the Portuguese. The latter earnestly solicited help from the then Portuguese Viceroy, who immediately fitted up a strong fleet and made every necessary arrangement to set out for the relief of the king of Cochin. Camões, who was ever ready to use his sword as patriotically as he did his pen, volunteered to join the armada with all the enthusiasm that swayed his soldier's heart. Besides Camões, many other distinguished sons of Portugal took part in the expedition. They were Dom Fernando de Menezes, son of the Viceroy ; Bastião de Sá, and Dom Alvaro de Noronha ; Vasco da Cunha, and Francisco Barreto, who in 1555 was appointed Governor of India ; Gil de Goes, Manoel de Mascarenhas, and Antonio Moniz Barreto, then quite a young man, who in 1573 was again sent out from Portugal to govern India ; Dom Diogo de Athayde and many other noblemen of distinction and valour. The fleet consisted of a hundred sail, and carried the flower of the Portuguese army in India.

The expedition was completely successful, and the hostile forces were put to rout by the Portuguese. Camões himself has celebrated the triumph of this armada in an elegy, which he probably wrote soon after his return to Goa. Says he :
 “ We set out from Goa with a large fleet, which the Viceroy had brought together with all the available military men. With little difficulty we destroyed the people, who were trained to use only the curved bow, and punished them with fire and death. The island was intersected with waters so that it was necessary to use *almadias* or Indian boats to go from one place to another. In fine, the island was another Venice.”

Com huma grossa armada, que juntára
 O Viso-Rei, de Goa nós partimos.
 Com toda a gente de armas que se achára,
 E com pouco trabalho destruimos
 A gente no curvo arco exercitada ;
 Com morte, com incendios os punimos.
 Era a ilha com aguas alagada,
 De modo que se andava em almadias ;
 Em fim, outra Veneza trasladada.

The horrors of the battle field and the perils attendant upon soldier's life provoke the poet to contrast the simple and blissful life of the farmers of his own sweet native land with that of the men, who go out to try their fortunes in naval and military adventures. For in the same elegy, wherein he celebrates the victory of Portuguese arms, he sings the charms and beauties of rustic life. “ O blessed farmers ! If you could only know what a contented and happy life you live in your own fields ! The impartial earth provides you with food, the fountain with pure water, and the ewes with copious milk. You witness neither the rage of the sea nor the horrors of a dismal night, like those who go out in quest for the treasures of the East, nor have you to fear the fury of fierce war. You live contented and

happy among your vines, and your peaceful life is not ruffled by any greed for shining gold. If your houses do not sparkle with gold, your fields, where the kids graze and sport, glisten with the light of a thousand flowers :”

Oh lavradores bemaventurados !
So conhecessem seu contentamento,
Como vivem no campo socegados !

Dá-lhes a justa terra o mantimento ;
Dá-lhes a fonte clara a agua pura,
Mungem suas ovelhas cento a cento.

Não vêm o mar irado, a noite escura,
Por ir buscar a pedra do Oriente ;
Não temem o furor da guerra dura.

Vive hum com suas arvores contente,
Sem lhe quebrar o somno repousado
A grão cubiça de ouro reluzente.

Se suas casas de ouro não esmaltam,
Esmalta-se-lhe o campo de mil flores
Oude os cabritos seus comendo saltam.

Not long after his arrival in India, Camões wrote the first of the two letters published as a part and parcel of his works. The poet describes in this letter the conflict that raged in his mind at the time he departed from his country, and says that he took leave of his native shores with the cursing words of Scipio : *Ingrata patria, non possidebis ossa mea*. Speaking of Portuguese India, as witnessed by him with his own eyes, he remarks : “ Of this country I can only say that she is the mother of the worst villains and step-mother of honourable men.” The evils of corrupt life in India are also touched upon, and there is a description of the ladies which is far from favourable. Enclosed

in this letter, that was written to one of his friends in Portugal, the poet sent a sonnet dedicated to the memory of his excellent friend, Dom Antonio de Noronha, the news of whose untimely death in the course of an engagement with the Moors near Ceuta had reached him some time after his arrival in India :

Em flor vos arrancou, de então crescida,
 (Ah Senhor Dom Antonio !) a dura sorte,
 Onde fazendo andava o braço forte
 A fama dos antigos esquecida.

On the return of the victorious expedition from Cochin to Goa, the energetic Viceroy set his hands to the equipment of another fleet to exterminate the vessels of the Moorish pirates that infested the Red Sea along the coast of Arabia. The soldier poet again offered to serve in the new armada, which had orders to proceed to the Straits of Mecca and to engage the hostile ships that were expected to arrive in those waters. Dom Fernando de Menezes, the brave son of the Viceroy, was in command of the fleet, which sailed from Goa in February, 1554, carrying "one thousand and two hundred men in six galleons, six caravels and twenty-five pinnaces." No hostile ships, however, were to be seen anywhere, and after an ineffectual cruise the fleet sailed away to winter at Muscat in the Persian Gulf. On reaching this port, Dom Fernando de Menezes handed over the command of the armada to Manoel de Vasconcellos, whom the Viceroy had sent, according to Diogo de Couto, to advise his son in matters of all kinds, and himself proceeded to Ormuz. In the following August Dom Fernando was informed by his spies of the whereabouts of Moorish vessels, whereupon he went back to Muscat, and immediately sailed from this port with the whole armada. After a short cruise he sighted the hostile galleys, which were fifteen in number, and at once gave battle to them. The enemy vessels, however, soon withdrew to

the coast and thus escaped the Portuguese ships, which could not pursue them as the waters near the coast were full of rocks. But Dom Fernando was prudent enough to bide his time, and as soon as a more favourable opportunity offered itself, he joined battle with the Moorish ships. The engagement did not last long, and of the fifteen galleys seven escaped, two were wrecked, and six were captured. Thus ended the second of the two expeditions, which hold a conspicuous place in the history of Portuguese India, not so much because of their naval or military importance, as on account of the rare distinction that Camões took part in both of them.

Camões has left us an account, in his own divine language, of the experiences he had during the second expedition. The coast of Arabia, along which the armada cruised for some eight months, is one continual wilderness, and as such does not favourably appeal to the poet's eyes. Not a spring smiles by the hill-side, not a brook waters a green plant, not a landscape relieves the eye. On the contrary, Camões finds himself in the neighbourhood of a desolate mountain, a dry, barren, and shapeless mass of earth, where neither a bird flies, nor a beast sleeps, where neither a clear river flows, nor a fountain bubbles, nor the cheerful rustling of a green branch is heard. This is mount Felix :

Junto de hum secco, duro, esteril monte,
 Inutil e despido, calvo e informe,
 Da natureza em tudo aborrecido ;
 Oade nem ave voa, ou fera dorme,
 Nem corre claro rio ou ferve fonte,
 Nem verde ramo faz doce ruído ;
 Cujo nome, do vulgo introduzido,
 He Felix—

Destiny had ordained that the poet should live a part of his precious existence in this remote and desolate part of the world, so that his life might be distributed in pieces throughout the world, as if, let us add, she were particularly desirous to let the singer of the national glories of Portugal travel as far and wide as did this country's Flag :

Aqui nesta remota, aspera, e dura
 Parte do mundo, quiz que a vida breve
 Tambem de si deixasse hum breve espaço ;
 Porque ficasse a vida
 Por o mundo em pedaços repartida,

And Camões continues to ascend the calvary of his existence with a spirit of serene and unruffled resignation. "Here," says he, continuing to give vent to the mournful feelings of his heart, "did I spend some of my sad, wretched, and solitary days, so full of work, sorrow, and wrath, and I had for my adversaries not only my life, the burning sun, the cold waters, the thick and sultry atmosphere, but my own thoughts :"

Aqui me achei gastando huns tristes dias,
 Tristes, forçados, maus, e solitarios,
 De trabalhos, de dor, de ira cheios :
 Não tendo tão somente por contrarios
 A vida, o sol ardente, as aguas frias,
 Os ares grossos, férvidos e feios,
 Mas os meus pensamentos—

And what thoughts and memories they must have been ! The poet is obviously overpowered by a vision of his native hills and rivers, and of the sunny landscapes that once fascinated him and charmed his soul, when he mused alone by the banks of the Tagus and the Mondego, while the sombre realities of his situation make him weep over the misfortunes of his tragic

existence. Over and above, the memories of *alguma já passada e breve gloria*, of some short-lived happiness, appeal to the most delicate side of his nature, and placed amidst the ungrateful surroundings of a sun-burnt wilderness, he seeks comfort, strange to say, in the recollections of the one woman, who has made him suffer so much in life, and left him at the mercy of his own feelings, so full of anguish and pain. In spite of himself, Camões recalls the days when he basked in the sunshine of Natercia's smiles, and from the memories of his past associations with her he draws strength and consolation to fight against the thoughts of death that so ferociously stares him in the face. These fond recollections soothe his heart and cheer him up with hope, and under the influence of this serene prospect of life the great sufferings of his heart soften down into sweet and tender *saudades* :

Só com vossas lembranças
 Me acho seguro e forte
 Contra o rosto feroz da fera morte ;
 E logo se me juntam esperanças,
 Com que a fronte tornada mais serena,
 Torno os tormentos graves
 Em saudades brandas e suaves.

Driven by circumstances to that vast solitude where Nature conspired with his own feelings to make him a victim of the growing sufferings of his life, and where the last of his hopes seemed to disappear in the mist of pessimism and despair, Camões wept over the memories of the sunny days of his romantic youth—days which now emerged before his eyes like a little oasis in the desert of his sad and tragic existence. Destiny had decreed that Natercia, the woman who had so carelessly trifled with the affections of his heart, should be the eternal hallucination of his mind, the perennial dream of his imagination, the everlasting mirage of his life. Whether he lived as an exile

in the vicinity of the Tagus or served his motherland in the hot plains of Africa, whether he dreamed under the palms of India or cruised along the wild and barren coast of Arabia, the one phantom that haunted him day and night was the image of Natercia. This ungrateful lady had perhaps already forgotten even the name of Camões, while she lived in his imagination as an ethereal and spiritualised being, the inspirer of his life and the stay of his poetic ideals. Frail and capricious like others of her sex, she now little cared for the one man, who has handed down her name to immortality. "And who knows," writes Latino Coelho, "if this woman, Natercia, due to the frailty and caprice, with which women so often despise the love of great souls only to bury their charms and beauty in the base flesh of some man without a heart and without talent—who knows if she, out of vanity to receive the adoration of her immortal lover, would make him a return of false love for all that he did by way of transfiguring her into an ideal woman? And is there not many a woman, who leaves vacant the throne erected for her by a man of genius, and prefers to extinguish in the obscure shadow of some base and material love the divine light reflecting on her brow from the glory of her despised lover?" Shakespeare never did greater justice to the weaker sex than when he said : Frailty, thy name is woman !

Camões returned to Goa with the victorious armada in September, 1554, when Dom Pedro de Mascarenhas had already arrived from Lisbon to succeed Dom Affonso de Neronha as Viceroy of India.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VICTIM.

Pois que direi d'aquelles, que em delicias,
Que o vil ocio no mundo traz comsigo,
Gastam as vidas, logram as divicias,
Esquecidos de seu valor antigo?

Lus. VII, 8.

"What shall I say of the men who, forgetful of their former glory, waste their lives and wealth in the enjoyment of pleasures, which base sloth brings in its train?"

By a tragic irony of fate the India, which it was given to Camões to see and live in, was not the same as we find pictured in the glowing pages of the *Lusiads*. Where Almeida, Albuquerque, and Castro had founded the tradition that the Portuguese were a race of heroes and demigods, there were now found a set of men, whose lives provided an antithesis to the history and traditions of their immortal predecessors. Where virtues of heroism and sentiments of chivalry had teemed in the conduct of life, there was now a moral desert without a single redeeming feature excepting that of past memories. How great, then, must have been the despair of Camões, when with his own eyes he witnessed the disintegration of the empire, built up by the heroic will of selfless patriots and undermined by men, who prostituted their power and sullied national honour without shame or scruple? The first impressions of the poet were therefore far from happy, and he summed up the situation in a single sentence, when he wrote to a friend of his in Portugal that India "is the mother of great villains and step mother of honourable men." This degraded state of affairs in India had a very discouraging effect on the selfless and virtuous mind of

Camões, and so the man that was celebrating the glories of his country interrupted for a time his noble work only to expose the vices of his countrymen by means of satires, transforming his lyre into a lash to chastise the corrupt practices of his compatriots in India.

We have already seen that, when Camões arrived in Goa in September, 1554, with the armada that returned from the Straits of Mecca, Dom Pedro de Mascarenhas had succeeded Dom Affonso de Noronha as Viceroy of India. The new Viceroy was an old man and died in June, 1555, being succeeded by Francisco Barreto, whose attitude towards Camões has given rise to an endless controversy, into the merits and demerits of which we need not enter in a work of this kind. Suffice it to say that during the *regime* of Barreto, Camões wrote a satire on "*Disparates da India*" (Follies of India), wherein he censured the corrupt practices of private and public life among his countrymen in India, and also produced another satire at which, according to Faria e Sousa, "Barreto took effence, because it censured the conduct of some persons, who had celebrated his elevation by an exhibition called the *Sport of Canes*."

Dom José Maria de Sousa is of opinion that the second satire was not written by Camões, "since no spark of his genius appears in it." We may here observe in passing that it has long been a fad among literary critics to say that a particular piece of writing does not come from the pen of the author to whom it is generally ascribed, simply because the writing in question happens to be inferior in merit to other productions of that author. Such a line of reasoning may be tenable in certain cases, but critics must never lose sight of the probability that men of genius may take an intellectual holiday for themselves by indulging in a kind of playful composition. Coming back to our point, surely Dom José could not expect Camões to produce a work of great literary merit to laugh at the servile conduct of a set of miserable parasites?

The result of these satires was that our poet courted the envy and ill wishes of the men, whose morals he censured, and who left no stone unturned to prejudice the mind of Francisco Barreto against him. At last matters came to a head, and either at the instigation of the enemies of the poet or acting on his own initiative, the Governor exiled Camões to Macao, and to mitigate the severity of this punishment it is said he conferred on his victim the post of *Provedor dos defunctos e ausentes*, Commissary of the effects of deceased and absent persons in Macao, where a Portuguese colony was going to be founded at that time. Some biographers of the poet deny that he was appointed to any such office, and point out the circumstance that a boon of this kind would practically neutralise the punishment inflicted on him. It is probable, however, that Francisco Barreto, either realising the entire helplessness of his illustrious victim or the injustice of his action against him, tried to ease his conscience by some show of generosity.

Camões is believed to have left the shores of Goa in March, 1556, and to have sailed for the Far East in the fleet commanded by Francisco Martins, who, according to the terms of an agreement entered into between Captain Leonel de Sousa and the Chinese authorities in Canton, was setting out to exterminate the pirates and smugglers that had settled in Macao and to establish a Portuguese colony in that place. After the conquest of Malacca by Affonso de Albuquerque in 1511, the Portuguese had succeeded in going as far north along the coast of China as Ning Phó, which at one time practically became a Portuguese city with a population of more than a thousand souls and six or seven churches. The awkward system of Chinese trade, as it existed at that time, gave the Portuguese an excellent opportunity to smuggle contraband articles with the connivance of the natives of the land, and from Ning Phó the activities of smugglers went on spreading over several parts of the country. In 1548 the Chinese

Government realised the gravity of the situation, and immediately swept off the pirates and smugglers that had so long succeeded in evading the law. The Portuguese establishments in the north, too, as they were connected with this dishonest game, were severely taken to task and done away with. In the south, however, the Portuguese were allowed to carry on their trade peacefully in Canton from 1554, when Captain Leonel de Sousa intervened with the local authorities on behalf of his countrymen, and compelled these to abide by the laws of the land. We have already seen that Francisco Martins was proceeding with a fleet to Macao to help the Chinese Government in their action against piracy and smuggling and to found a Portuguese colony in the little corner of China above referred to. "This, then," writes Oliveira Martins, from whom is taken the greater part of the information given in this paragraph, "is the origin of the Portuguese settlement of Macao, at the founding of which Camões was going to be present."

CHAPTER XII.

THE GROTTTO OF CAMOES.

Onde acharei lugar tão apartado,
 E tão isento em tudo da ventura,
 Que, não digo eu de humana creatura,
 Mas nem de feras seja frequentado ?

*Where shall I find a place so set apart,
 So free from all that soothes the feeling heart,
 That it be not to human kind alone,
 But to the brute creation too, unknown ?*

There are traditions, which cannot stand the light of critical examination, but yet are more implicitly believed in than

authentic facts of history. This paradox will remain a characteristic feature of the life of man, so long as sentiment, the sweetest quality of the human heart, continues to exert its subtle influence in human affairs. One of these is the tradition that, during his residence at Macao, Camões would spend his leisure hours in that romantic grotto, which is now called after him, and where in the silence of solitude he would commune with the sea, while the tears that trickled down his cheeks revealed to him one by one the secrets of Portuguese national life and heroism. This tradition is neither suggested nor upheld by the works of Camões, nay, the critics of the poet emphasise its improbability, and his biographers are unable to support it with any historical authority. Writes Latino Coelho : “ During the residence of Camões in the colony of Macao, there is no evidence to safely guide us to ascertain the kind of life he lived. The commentators and chroniclers are silent on this point. The poems of Camões do not contain a single allusion.” And speaking of the poet in connection with the grotto, the same writer adds that “ it is remarkable that not one of his poems can be shown to have been written in this abode of delight and revelation.” But the lovers and admirers of Camões have already consecrated the traditional grotto with feelings of deep respect and reverence, and what is not even vaguely supported by any historical evidence has been accepted as unquestionably true on the strength of the verdict of the human heart ; so that as surely as a Christian pilgrim does not leave Jerusalem without seeing the Calvary, so surely a traveller does not leave Macao without paying a visit to the grotto of Camões. “ Travellers who go from Hong-Kong to that little Monte Carlo of the East, as it is called,” writes an American in the course of the description of his visit to Macao, “ like to visit the raw silk-factory, with its rainbow looms and with the tiresome game of fan-tan being played at the tables ; but better still it is to drive up the hill from the blue bay, catching the scent of the almonds and oleanders along the road, until one

comes to the garden where the great poet lived more than three hundred and fifty years ago. The laurels grow thick about the bronze head, the birds sing in the ilex shadows, and the very air seems to be for ever speaking his name: Camões!" The tradition is therefore too sacred to be discarded as a mere legend, and we have to take into account the fact that the grotto of Camões has now taken the proportions of a *sanctum sanctorum* of the universal sentiment of the lovers and worshipers of the poet. We must therefore accept it as such, leaving the critic severely alone to reason out the circumstances of its probability or otherwise.

Here, in his grotto, seated at the very ends of the world, we can well imagine how Camões was writing the last cantos of the *Lusiads*, and calling upon heaven and earth to show if braver and more heroic men had ever lived in this world than the *varões assinalados*, whose deeds he was celebrating in song, to which even gods might listen. Ten years had elapsed since he was awakened to the consciousness of a new life, and the secret of his destiny was revealed to him, by the seductive smiles of a lovely girl, but now he was on the summit of his genius, and every single beat of his heart added a new note to his epic song. Ten years before, driven into exile to suffer for the romantic extravagances of his youth, dreams and visions were hovering before his mind's eye in the Elysian valley of the Tagus, but now he was translating them into material bodies and making them live for ever to delight, edify, and educate the world. These visions could no longer be the airy and unsubstantial things they were once, for the poet forced them out one by one from his creative imagination, and gave them material shape with the skill and precision of a master artist. Even in sleep the genius of Camões labours and is active. His dreams lift him up higher and higher into the skies, and from the very summit of the universe he contemplates the world that smiles on him from down below—the very world discovered by Portuguese heroes and conquered by national arms :

.....Subia

Tão alto, que tocava a primeira esphera,
D'onde diante varios mundos via.

Lus. IV, 69.

Like St. Ignatius of Loyala, Camões reads the apocalypse of his life in the silence of his grotto. The tragic and dramatic figures of the *Lusiads* pass in review before his eyes. He sees the heroic sons of his country vie with one another to cross in frail barks the perilous waters of the Atlantic. Some sink for ever under the mighty waves, others contend with winds and tempests, while others again sail onward and onward, through danger and death, *por mares nunca dantes navegados*, to far and distant lands, across the seas and around the world. The epic heart of Camões melts away in secret raptures, and he is overpowered by his passion for his own ideals. Scene after scene, drama after drama, tragedy after tragedy, is being enacted before his eyes. Albuquerque *terribil* and Castro *forte*; Gama, the national Aeneas, and Pacheco, the Portuguese Achilles; and so many others over whom death had no power. These are the mighty figures that spring up before his eyes and command him to tell the world, in sublime and beautiful numbers, what they have done for the Flag and the Cross. Camões rises up and falls on his knees, and entreats his Muse to teach him her language so that he may worthily sing the arms and heroes of his native land:

Agora tu, Calliope, me ensina

.....

Inspira immortal canto, e voz divina,
N'este peito mortal, que tanto te ama

..... ..

Põe tu, nympha, em effeito meu desejo,
Como merece a gente lusitana.

Lus. III, 1, 2.

We know how his Muse inspired Camões, what poetic fire she kindled in his breast, and how she taught him the language of the gods that he might sing to the world the glories of his race. And we also know how passionately the poet responded to the inspiration of his Muse, writing his great Bible at her immediate dictation. The misfortunes of Camões crystallised his thoughts and feelings, admitted him to the company of the gods, and, suppressing the cravings of the flesh for things material, made him the angelic being he was. And his prolonged exile was a blessing in disguise to him, an education by itself, a happy period of sufferings in so far as it helped him to infuse into his *Lusiads* so many spiritual and moral beauties, that invest this great epic with a divine touch. "Such is the happy result of the misfortunes of the poet, and of the *Lusiads* having been conceived and written in exile, in the silent company of Nature, and not amid the din and noise of courts. Nothing is so inspiring as solitude, nothing helps one to understand life better than misfortunes, and it is these that revealed to Camões, in silence and tears trickling down his cheeks, the secrets of the Portuguese soul."

In Sir Wm Ouselay's oriental collections there is a wood-cut (reproduced in this work), which is a sketch of the celebrated grotto of Camões, and it is accompanied, in that publication, by a description of the place by Eyles Irvin, who introduces his subject by an eulogy on the poet. This description is quoted by John Adamson in his "Memoirs of Camões," whence it is transcribed in these pages.

"The sketch will recall to the feeling mind the chequered lot of Genius, whose sublimity could not preserve it from the shafts of malice, and whose degradation was only wanting to complete its triumph over a persecuting world! In this secluded spot he found that peace, which the Court and the Camp had alike denied him; and to a Pagan nation he was indebted for

that security, which he courted in vain among the Christians of the East. At once the boast and reproach of his country, he extended her renown on the confines of the Pacific Ocean ; and the poem he produced in this retreat might make us cry out with the sympathetic Bard :—

Yet sacred be the alien spot,
Where, by a senseless world forgot,
The poet charmed this distant shore
With Epic tones unheard before,
And in a desert, doom'd to shame,
Rear'd his pyramid of fame !
T'Amphion's lyre so fable gives
The magic power by which he lives.
And oft to Fancy's pensive ear
The son'rous notes are full and clear,
As, coasting nigh the moonlight dell,
The stranger kens the poet's cell :
Where warbled Love, or Wit the rhyme,
Syrens from the birth of Time !
That tempt thro' seas, with storms o'ercast,
To Immortality at last.

The Grotto of Camões is pleasantly situated on the western shore of the promontory of Macao, and faces the harbour, which divides it on that side from the mainland. This promontory is a narrow neck of land, whose stony and barren surface is only rendered habitable by the sea breezes that blow from three quarters of the compass, and somewhat temper the natural heat of the climate. Of trees or verdure there is but a small proportion ; and to the pleasure grounds, in which the Grotto has been enclosed, that proportion seems chiefly to have been allotted. To the taste and enthusiasm of Mr. William Fitzhugh, one of the Company's former Supercargos at Canton, the Poet is indebted for the preservation of this memorial of his labours ;

and the public for the opportunity of paying their tribute at his shrine. A few acres have here been laid out to as much advantage as a singular diversity of ground, and a romantic site, within so narrow a compass, would admit. The land bordering the sea consists of strata of stone, thrown here and there into a kind of Cromlech, whose skeleton state, from which the equinoxial rains have washed the soil, evidently denotes them to be the productions of nature. In the centre of the area a more considerable eminence appears, on which the principal Cromlech stands, bearing on its shoulders a temple in the Chinese taste, that crowns the Grotto of Camões. This is merely an excavation in the rock beneath, where a profile of the bard has been scratched on the wall, of no further merit than to remind us of the genius of the place. Nothing can be more beautiful or extensive than the view from this spot. To the east and north it is, indeed, sheltered by the ridge that intersects the promontory ; but, to the south, the city of Macao, with its steeples and castles, fills the eye, which, glancing to the west, meets a prospect diversified with verdant isles, and a line of woody and cultivated coast, bounded by the majestic Montagna, whose pyramidical form and dark aspect add no small charm to the scenery of nature. From the moving objects in the harbour, which entertain for a while, the spectator turns with anxiety to the plantations below him, where the vigorous and curious productions of the East so enliven and adorn this picturesque retirement, as to have rendered it the choice and admiration of His Excellency Earl Macartney during his short abode at Macao.

That a scene, and occasion like this, should awaken the sympathy and exercise the talent of the poetical traveller, will surprise no feeling mind. To blend the effect with the cause, and to make allowance for a spontaneous tribute to the sufferings and merits of the divine Camões, is what the author may safely expect from the literary reader :—

SONNET.

High-favour'd grot ! that on the jutting verge
 Of Old Cathay, in shades sequester'd plac'd,
 Saw, with the poet's form, thy pavement grac'd—
 Studious his lyre to epic heights to urge.
 This be thy fame—not that the wreath which age
 Weaves for thy region with! mysterious hands ;
 Nor yet th' achievements of the daring bands,
 Whose glory blaz'd unrivall'd on the stage.
 Veiled is her pride ! their sun is set in shame !
 But oft the pilgrim to his cell shall stray,—
 Still find the Poet living in his lay,
 While taste and genius glow at Camões' name.
 Still, with thy votary, strew the sill with flowers,
 Their lot far happier own, but ah ! less blest their powers ! ”

J. F. Davis has dedicated some beautiful verses in Latin to “the cave where Camões is said to have written his great work.” In the course of these verses, the illustrious writer says that sepulchral silence now reigns in the rocky cave, which bears a permanent stamp of the genius of Camões ; but the name and glory of the poet are still with us, and his divine song will live through the ages yet to come. Thus does a man of genius, observes the writer in the concluding stanza, win immortality for himself, his fame enduring for all time and surviving the ruin of bronze and marble monuments, which are too feeble to resist the destructive power of Time.



THE GROTTO OF CAMÕES.



IN CAVERNAM UBI

CAMOENS.

Opus egregium composuisse fertur.

Hic, in remotis sol ubi rupibus
Frondes per altas mollius incidit,
Fervebat in pulchram camoenam
Ingenium Camoentis ardens :

Signum et poetae marmore lucido
Spirabat olim, carminibus sacrum,
Parvumque, quod vivens amavit,
Effigie decorabat antrum :

Sed jam vetustas, aut manus impia
Prostravit, eheu ! Triste silentium
Regnare nunc solum videtur
Per scopulos, virides et umbras ;

At fama nobis restat—at inclytum,
Restat poetae nomen—at ingeni
Stat carmen exemplum perenne,
Aerea nec monumenta quaerit.

Sic usque Virtus vincit, ad ultimas
Perducta fines temporis, exitus
Ridens sepulchrorum inanes
Marmoris et celerem ruinam.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ACCUSED

A troco dos descansos, que esperava,
Das capellas de louro, que me honrassem,
Trabalhos nunca usados me inventaram,
Com que em tão duro estado me deitaram

*In place of bays around my brows to shed.
Their sacred honours, o'er my destined head
Foul calumny proclaimed the fraudulent tale
And left me mourning in a dreary jail.*

Lus VII, 81.

We do not know for certain how long the exile of Camões lasted, nor has any information come down to us in the light of which we may ascertain in what year he actually left Macao. Some of the most recent and standard authorities say that the poet resided at this "Monte Carlo of the East" from 1556 to 1558, while the eminent biographer, Dom Francisco Alexandre Lobo, Bishop of Vizeu, and those that agree with him, believe that he left the place so late as 1561. Moreover, the earliest biographers and contemporaries of Camões, suggest that the poet was accused of some misconduct in the exercise of his office of *Provedor* and was consequently summoned to Goa to defend himself, while Faria e Sousa thinks that he left Macao of his own accord. As it is practically impossible to find a way out of this labyrinth of contradictory evidence, we shall, for purposes of maintaining some chronological sequence in this work, agree with the biographers, who say that Camões left Macao in 1558, and shall also subscribe to the extremely probable view that he was recalled to India to answer some gratuitous charges brought against him by the Portuguese pharisees in Goa, whose vices and hypocrisy he had held up to ridicule in his satires.

Some two years of cruel exile, then, mark the period of time, spent by Camões at the extreme ends of the earth so that he might give due fulfilment to his destiny, which had in anticipation so fixed the stages of his life as to distribute it into pieces throughout the whole world, *por que ficasse a vida por o mundo em pedaços repartida*. At the end of this period Camões embarked on a ship bound for India, carrying with him no other wealth than *El tesoro del Luso*, as Cervantes has so happily characterised the *Lusiads*. The Fates, however, who ever took care to affix link after link to the already long chain of his misfortunes, had a fresh calamity in store for him, and a very happy calamity it was in that it sublimated the life of the poet with a unique touch of heroism. Somewhere in the vicinity of the Mekong, a river in Cochin-China, the ship which conveyed the poet was wrecked, and he himself was left helpless to struggle for life in deep waters and to decide the great conflict of his own soul—to be or not to be. To make a supreme effort of physical and moral strength to save his life, or to let himself perish in the tempestuous waters of the sea—that is the question of questions to the man whose existence remains at the mercy of the waves. The accumulated miseries of his life, the cruelties of men and women, the ingratitude of his country—all these induce the drowning poet to view the prospect of death with a feeling of relief, but the infinite love he bears for his country makes him cling to life with all the strength of his will and resolution. He therefore contends with winds and waves to save himself and to set back the hand of Death. Every moment the conflict becomes more and more intense, but still he clings to the precious treasure which enshrines the passion of his soul and the glory of his nation. The hour of heroism is the hour of triumph, as it is also the hour of victory over Death. Breathless, exhausted, and desperately alone, Camões swims with one hand and with the other he secures the *Lusiads*. Portugal! O thrice ungrateful land! Behold thy son, who has suffered

exiles and persecutions at thy hands, behold how he saves thy great traditions and thy still greater history ! Art thou so blind as not to be able to see how he contends with furious elements, not to save so much his own life as the divine song, wherein thou livest with all the lustre of thy golden past and the light of thy heroic actions ?

The shipwreck took place off the mouth of the Mekong, and after a successful struggle with the tempestuous waters of the sea Camões swam to one of the banks of this river, whose gentle and hospitable waters received him and the *Lusiads*. This unique incident in the life of the poet has elicited from his biographers words of sincere tribute and admiration, and he himself has referred to it in the prophetic song of the tenth canto of his great epic, but has done so with the characteristic modesty of his nature, as if too diffident to set any value on his own action, otherwise so praiseworthy and meritorious. The original lines are inimitable and every single word has a poetic charm all its own :

Este receberá placido e brando,
No seu regaço o Canto, que molhado
Vem do naufragio triste e miserando,
Dos procellosos baixos escapado,
Das fomes, dos perigos grandes, quando
Será o injusto mando executado
N'aquelle, cuja lyra sonora
Será mais afamada, que ditosa.

Lus X, 128

The *Lusiads* was by this time practically complete. The glories of the Lusitanian race were made to live for ever by the genius of Camões in an epic song, the music of which had reached the choirs of heaven, and would in course of time charm the ears of men. Perhaps the only anxiety that now weighed

heavy on the mind of the poet was the fear lest some unforeseen disaster should destroy this only child of his, born, not of flesh and blood, but of the purest feelings of his heart and of lofty ideals of his mind. But this was certainly a false presentiment, since in the delirium of his love for the *Lusiads* the divine bard forgot that no earthly calamity could possibly destroy his epic song, which was as much a work of the gods as it was his. For is it not clear that the very idea of the *Lusiads* was conceived and realised by the power and inspiration of the deities presiding over the destinies of Portugal? Is the great epic itself not a living proof that the poet was courted by the Muses and his soul illuminated by a ray of heavenly light? The fears of Camões were therefore imaginary and groundless in that the *Lusiads* was invested with a breath of immortality by the gods themselves. The disaster of shipwreck had made it clear that even the elements cannot prevail against what enjoys the patronage of heaven, and Camões saving the *Lusiads* was but an objective manifestation of the truth written across the face of the universe: that a child of the gods shall live, even if a thousand Herods conspire to take its life.

And now that he has fulfilled his mission, Camões invites his native nymphs to bear witness to the work done by him, and entreats them to see how during his long and painful sojourn he has been singing the Tagus and the glories of the Lusitanian race, now facing the perils of the sea, now experiencing the terrors of the battlefield, the sword in one hand and the pen in another:

Olhae, que ha tanto tempo que cantando
 O vosso Tejo, e os vossos lusitanos,
 A fortuna me traz peregrinando,
 Novos trabalhos vendo, e novos danos :
 Agora o mar, agora exp'rimentando
 Os perigos Mavorcios inhumanos ;
 Qual Canace, que á morte se condena,
 N'uma mão sempre a espada, e n'outra a penna.

Lus. VII, 79.

Though the epic tide of the heart of Camões had now begun to ebb, the emotional and [sentimental side of it still retained the warmth and ardour of those days, when he, unconscious of his appointed mission in life, was singing what the delirium of youthful romance made him believe to be the only reality of his life—the love of Natercia. Now, however, shipwrecked and cast on a distant shore, the poet experiences life in all its terrible reality, which bears a singular contrast to the illusions of his past life. But despite the sufferings and exiles inflicted on him by his countrymen, Camões sends [his thoughts to his own dear native land, to his *ditosa patria amada*, whose hills and rivers were at one time a great university of education to him, and whose love is still the motive power of his life. Seated by the banks of the Mekong, the poet tries to give vent to the feelings of his heart by paraphrasing that pathetic psalm, wherein the Jews, in the most touching strain of poetry, are represented as hanging their harps on the willows by the side of the rivers of Babylon, and lamenting their exile from their native land. Like the Jews, Camões finds himself by the rivers of a Babylon, and weeps over the memories of his own country and scenes of native joys. In the midst of tears that trickle down his cheeks, the poet compares the actual condition of his life with the exile of the Jews in Babylon and his *patria amada* with Sion :

Sobre os rios, que vão
 Por Babylonia, me achei,
 Onde sentado chorei
 As lembranças de Siao,
 E quanto n'ella passei.
 Alli o rio corrente
 De meus olhos foi manado :
 E tudo bem comparado,
 Babylonia ao mal presente,
 Siao ao tempo passado.

(Cf. Psalm 136)

Stranded on the shores of a strange country and forced to live among semi-barbarous but kind and hospitable people, the recollections of his own dear native land combine with the memories of his youthful days to make his soul sink deeper and deeper into affliction and to make him sigh for the place, which so long nursed the epic ideals of his mind, and is now capturing every single feeling of his heart. The idealist in Camões, however, begins to aspire for something more than the hills and valleys and rivers of his country, which undergoes a process of spiritualisation in his mind, until at last his imagination transfigures it into a celestial home. The poet burns with a longing desire to see the land, not where his flesh but his soul was born :

Não he logo a saudade
 Das terras onde nasceu
 A carne, mas he do Ceo
 Daquella santa Cidade
 Donde est'alma descendeo.

This is how Camões mused and lived by the banks of the Mekong and in the fields and marshes of Camboya, where by force of singular circumstances he was compelled to sojourn for some time and count the tedious hours of his life amid sighs and tears.

The poet sailed for Goa in a ship that picked him up while she was on her way to India, but as soon as he reached his destination, his enemies mobilised their forces of spite, envy, and hatred against him, and by order of the Governor, Francisco Barreto, who had sent him into exile to Macao, he was consigned to jail. "On his arrival in Goa," writes a Portuguese biographer of the poet, "Camões found in a jail the expected end of his voyage, and through the prison bars went out the echo of his hope to return to Lisbon. It still remained for him

to realise how vain was this hope, so that, all the illusions of his life being dissipated, he might keep alive after his death the only undying reality—the perfume of his soul, the memory of his sentiment, and the formula of his idea. For this is what the *Lusiads* is, and it is only this that persists and lives eternally.” Given the heroic mission the poet had to fulfil in this world, it is not at all strange that we cannot speak of his life except in terms of adversity and misfortune. Exiles, persecutions, and prisons—these are the main chapters of his sad existence, sublimated by suffering and self-sacrifice, and embalmed for ever with the essence of his own virtues.

And to crown the misfortunes of his life, it was at about this time that he heard the tragic news that Dona Catharina de Athayde had died in Lisbon ! Alas ! the one rose, the perfume of which was the very breath of his life, was now lying for ever withered in the dust ! The one star, which was a source of light and inspiration to his idealistic mind, had suddenly vanished from the firmament of his life ! Natercia was no more !

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAST YEARS OF THE POET IN THE EAST.

Oh como se me alonga de anno em anno
A peregrinação cançada minha !
Como se encurta e como ao fim caminha
Este meu breve e vão discurso humano !

How from year to year my sojourn in this life is being prolonged ! How day by day is the course of my mortal existence approaching its end !

The imprisonment of Camões, brought about by a malicious campaign of intrigue and slander against him, was redeemed to

a certain extent by the fact that the year of his incarceration was also the time, when two of his best friends and companions of his youth in the sunny days of court life in Lisbon arrived in India to take charge of the high offices to which they were appointed. These were Alvaro da Silveira, invested with the command of an expedition to Ormuz, wherein he lost his precious life, and Dom Constantino de Bragança, who succeeded the haughty Francisco Barreto as Viceroy of India, and whose excellent rule aimed at reasserting the prestige and authority of the Portuguese name in a place, where the tide of corruption had already set in, and at delaying, as far as it could be done by wise administration, the progress of the decay and downfall of the Portuguese empire in the East.

The biographers of Camões are unanimous in paying warm tribute to the character of Dom Constantino de Bragança, who, at the risk of courting hostility from those around him, endeavoured to unravel and expose the intriguing machinations, by means of which the enemies of the poet had succeeded in sending him to prison during the regime of Francisco Barreto. Be it said to the everlasting credit of the new Viceroy that not only did he work to restore Camões to freedom, but tried as far as he could to efface from his mind the memories of his past misfortunes, and moved partly by generous considerations of friendship and partly by admiration for his genius, assured him of his sympathy and protection, affording him every facility to live a life of comparative ease and tranquillity. Camões, on his part, heartily acknowledged and reciprocated the good wishes of his noble friend, the integrity and magnanimity of whose character cheered him up with the thought that Portuguese honour and chivalry were not yet dead. Sometime after the arrival of Dom Constantino in India, Camões dedicated to him some *oitavas*, written after the manner and style of Horace's epistle to the Emperor Augustus, wherein he addresses the new

Viceroy as rare and illustrious prince, *príncipe ilustre e raro*, and sings his devotion to duty, his loyalty to King and Country, his sense of honour and love for justice, and incidentally contrasts the austere morality of his administration with the loose and corrupt tone of the preceding one. Certainly no base or servile motives dictated to Camões this course of action, since nothing could make him stoop so low as to court the good graces of any one in power by flattery or subservience. What actually made him give honour to whom honour was due was his eagerness to sing the praises of those, who in private and public life upheld the heroic and honourable traditions of his country, and not the base desire of any reward—*e não de algum premio vil desejo*, as he himself says in the poem referred to. And how could it be otherwise, since he had pledged his word to the Muses to celebrate the names only of those, who ever walked by the path of honour and duty, and remained ever true to their God, their King, and their Country, sacrificing even their precious lives for the love of these, and thereby winning the crown of immortality?

Aquelles só direi, que aventuraram
 Por seu Deus, por seu Rei, a amada vida,
 Onde perdendo-a, em fama a dilataram,
 Tão bem de suas obras merecida.

Lus. VII, 87.

On regaining his liberty, Camões is said to have taken part in the armada despatched from Goa for the conquest of Damaun. The armada consisted of "more than a hundred ships carrying nearly three thousand men." After the conquest of Damaun the Viceroy sent Dom Alvaro da Silveira to the Straits of Mecca to destroy the hostile ships that infested those waters. It was the ambition of the Turks to bring the whole coast of Arabia as far as the Persian Gulf under their sway in order to secure for themselves the commercial advantages offered by these places, over

which the Portuguese were exercising a sort of protectorate from their factories at Ormuz and Busrah. With this object in view the Turks laid siege to Bahrein and tried to capture it. The Persian Sultan immediately appealed to the Portuguese for help, whereupon the Portuguese Captain at Ormuz despatched Dom João de Noronha with troops to the relief of Bahrein, and also gave orders to Dom Alvaro da Silveira, who was then cruising in the Arabian waters, to hasten to raise the siege. The attack of the Portuguese was not successful, and in the course of action the gallant officer, Dom Alvaro da Silveira, lost his life. The death of this excellent and dearest friend opened a fresh wound in the heart of Camões, who gave vent to his sorrow in a very pathetic elegy published by Visconde de Juromenha:

Eu só perdi o verdadeiro amigo,
Eu só hei de viver n'esta saudade,
Sabe Deus a tristeza com que o digo.
O meu Silveira era uma vontade,
Um amor, um desejo, um querer,
Ambos um coração e uma amizade—etc.

There is no evidence to show that Camões took part in the above expedition. If, however, he did so, as some biographers are inclined to think he did, then he could not have returned to Goa before the autumn of 1559. From this time up to the year 1561 the life of Camões was probably not embittered by any fresh misfortune, though he still lived in a state of want and penury. In 1561 Dom Constantino de Bragança was relieved from his viceregal duties by Dom Francisco Coutinho, Count of Redondo, who is also said to have been well-disposed towards the poet. Despite, however, the amicable relations of the new Viceroy with Camões, it is said that the poet was again sent to jail, probably because some fresh accusations were brought against him by his unscrupulous enemies. "The poet proved satisfactorily," says John Adamson,

“ from the place of his confinement that the charges which had been preferred against him were totally unfounded ; his evil fortune, however, still pursued him, for although the explanations of his conduct removed any suspicions from him, they could not release him from his pecuniary engagements.” The last words allude to the well-known case of Miguel Rodrigues Coutinho, nick-named *Fios-seccos*, who detained Camões in custody for a debt of two hundred cruzados. The poet at once appealed to the Viceroy and addressed him some extremely humorous lines, wherein he ridiculed the conduct of his creditor, who did not blush to play the Shylock.

Faria e Sousa is of opinion that Camões appealed for his release, offering to take part in the armada, wherein the Viceroy was about to sail for Calicut to sign a treaty of peace with the Zamorim in a most solemn manner. Camões was accordingly set free from prison, but it is doubtful whether he actually joined the viceregal retinue, as he wished to do. The Viceroy sailed with a very splendid armada. “ It was a fleet,” writes Oliveira Martins, “ of more than a hundred and forty ships, including eight or ten galleys ‘ the finest that the Moors had ever seen along that coast.’ The fleet carried about four thousand men, the flower of the Portuguese *fidalgua* in India, ‘ the most distinguished and splendid people that ever set out from Goa.’ The armada sailed down along the coast in triumph and the party disembarked at Tiracolle, where the Zamorim was. Here a solemn conference took place, and as soon as peace was signed, the Viceroy proceeded to Cochin, where the crew of the armada spent their idle hours in wrestling and duelling, giving vent to their passions according to the frenzied ways of oriental life. After sometime the armada returned to Goa, it being uncertain whether or not Camões took part in the expedition.”

During the greater part of the administration of the Count of Redondo, Camões seems to have lived a life of some ease and

comfort. Not only did he enjoy the friendship and sympathy of the Viceroy, but had around him a circle of trusted and excellent friends, who made him realise the truth of the beautiful saying that there is no cloud but has a silver lining. These were Dom Vasco de Athayde, Dom Francisco de Almeida, Heitor da Silveira, João Lopes Leitão and Francisco de Mello. One place, however, was lying vacant, and every time that the poet looked at it, he was moved to tears by the sight of the sombre cypress shadows moving over it. What place could this be other than the one left vacant by the death of the unfortunate Alvaro da Silveira? The company of the aforementioned friends was no doubt a source of great happiness to Camões, marking as it did an oasis of delight in the endless desert of trials and sufferings of his life. There is a story that during the *regime* of Dom Constantino de Bragança, Camões invited these friends of his to a dinner at his own residence. The invitation was accepted and on the appointed day the guests assembled at the house of the poet. When, however, they went to table and uncovered the plates, they found to their infinite amusement that, instead of the first course of meat, a set of appropriate verses was served to each one of them. This, of course, produced an outburst of merriment and laughter among the friends of Camões, whom they warmly congratulated on the success and humour of the joke. This amusing little composition of the poet is preserved to us in his works under the title of '*Convite que fez na India a certos Fidalgos.*'

In February, 1564, the Count of Redondo died, and the reins of government remained for a time in the hands of João de Mendonça, until Dom Antão de Noronha, who had fought side by side with Camões in Ceuta, arrived in the same year from Lisbon to take charge of the viceroyalty of India. The new Viceroy was accompanied by another friend of the poet, Dom Diogo de Menezes, who was appointed captain of the Portuguese

forces in Malacca. It is at this time, as some biographers maintain, and together with Dom Diogo de Menezes, that Camões left for Malacca, although others are inclined to think that this voyage was made by the poet some years before, when he was on his way to Macao. In the following passage he is said to have described Ternate, a volcanic island in the Moluccas: "With more than usual force the eternal fire heats an island in the East, inhabited by strangers, where the winter cheerfully revives the fields. The Portuguese nation holds possession of it by bloody arms. It is surrounded by a river of delightful seawaters. On the herbage, which it produces, the flocks and the eye jointly feed. Here my fortune willed that a considerable part of my life should be passed."

Com força desusada
 Aquece o fogo eterno
 Huma Ilha nas partes do Oriente,
 De estranhos habitada,
 Aonde o duro Inverno
 Os campos reverdece alegremente.
 A Lusitana gente
 Por armas sauguinosas
 Tem delle o senhorio.
 Cercada está de hum rio
 De maritimas aguas saudosas.
 Das hervas que aqui nascem,
 Os gados juntamente, e os olhos passem.
 Aqui minha ventura
 Quiz que huma grande parte
 Da vida.....se passasse.

The years from 1564 to 1566, which, in the opinion of some biographers Camões spent in visiting different parts of the Far East, mark a period of silence. Commenting on this phase of the life of the poet, writes Oliveira Martins: "The Muse of the

poet is silent. The world has no secrets to impression his mind. He saw and lived his life fully up to the days of inspiration in his grotto at Macao. As the Creator, after making the universe, takes rest ; as the chrysalis, on laying the seed, dies ; so does Camões, his mission fulfilled, live in silence. The sun of his thought had risen up to the meridian to attain the fulness of light, and was now gradually coming down to its setting point in an evening sweetened by sadness and disillusionment."

In 1567 Camões returned to Goa, and Dom Antão de Noronha, who was a friend of the poet, appointed him Feitor of Chaul, but as this post did not fall vacant before the poet left for Portugal, the appointment had no more than nominal significance. Camões had by this time ceased to take any pleasure in the affairs of this world, and had lived sufficiently long in the desert of life not to be any longer deceived by its will-o'-the-wisps. He had travelled over many lands and seas, served and worked for his country in different capacities, lived and moved among unknown tribes and peoples, but everywhere and at all times the cruelties of men and women had made him see the illusions of his life pass away one by one, until at last he was driven to the very extremity of despair, where even the light of his idealism seemed to fail him !

CHAPTER XV.

BACK TO HIS NATIVE LAND.

Esta é a ditosa patria minha amada ;
A'qual se o céu me dá, que eu sem perigo
Torne, com esta empresa já acabada,
Acabe-se esta luz alli comigo.

Lus. III. 21.

This is my dear and happy native land, and should Heaven permit that after completing my work I should return to her, may I die in her bosom.

Evening shadows were growing longer and longer and gradually filling up with darkness the sunny side of the face of the earth. Autumn leaves were falling off from trees and gathering thick on the ground. Grey clouds were moving athwart the skies and blotting out the blue heavens from sight. And while the bright face of Nature was thus lying hidden behind a veil of sombre colours, Camões groped his way in the darkness of life that had suddenly come upon him. He had travelled as far as the very ends of the world, singing all the way the glories of his nation, but finding at every step fresh trials and misfortunes in return for the heroic labours of his life :

Olhae, que ha tanto tempo que, cantando
O vosso Tejo, e os vossos lusitanos,
A fortuna me traz peregrinando
Novos trabalhos vendo, e novos danos :

Lus. VII, 79.

And now that he had completed his glorious work, his countrymen, instead of giving him rest and peace of mind he so well deserved and crowning his head with a laurel wreath to honour both him and themselves, invented false charges against his name and consigned him to jails and prisons to suffer for faults he had never committed :

A troco dos descansos, que esperava,
Das capellas de louro, que me honrassem,
Trabalhos nunca usados me inventaram,
Com que em tão duro estado me deitaram.

Lus, VII, 81.

But though his heart is heavy with the ingratitude of his country, still he burns with the desire to return to his *ditosa patria amada* to breathe again by the side of his native hills and groves, and to mingle his tears with the waters of the Tagus and the Mondego. But the summit of the calvary is not yet reached, and Destiny refuses to let her victim go before he undergoes the entire ordeal of his tragic but glorious existence. And so Camões—to compare small things with great—crushed down by the weight of his cross, ascends the Golgotha of his life without any Veronica to wipe off the blood-sweat running over his face in streams. He lives in death, for his life is one constant agony. He does not die, because every moment of his life he is dying :

Assi vivo ; e s'alguem te perguntasse,
Canção, porque não mouro,
Podes-lhe responder : que porque morro.

Worn out by sorrows and misfortunes, Camões finds himself at the same time reduced to a state of abject wretchedness, and is destitute of means even to defray the expenses of his voyage back to his native land, which marks the crowning point of his despair. The years of youthful hopes and dreams have long passed away, and the lofty epic visions, which at one time lit up his idealistic mind, now lie embodied in a mass of precious sheets of paper, while the poet himself is left alone in a sort of moral wilderness to pay the price of the most heroic adventure of his life. Every hour that passes draws him closer and closer to the one great and awful reality of life : the grave. And yet, though the tide of his existence is fast ebbing, that of his sufferings is flowing more rapidly than ever. The poet has lost the only consolation that gave him strength enough to militate against the despairing condition of his life : the consolation of hope. For during the days he has lived in this world experience has driven home to his mind the terrible truth that great hopes are great illusions :

Mingoando a idade vae, crescendo o damno ;
 Perdeo-se-me um remedio, que inda tinha :
 Se por experiencia se adivinha,
 Qualquer grande esperança he grande engano.

And at about the sunset of his life, when the fires of youth are smouldering in the ashes of age, when broken down by the wear and tear of his protracted exile he is weeping over the memories of the spring of his life, the image of his sweetheart rises up before his eyes. Natercia, now transformed into a spirit, *alma gentil*, appears to him in an angelic form, not, as once before, to kindle in his heart the flame of love and epic fire, but to reveal to him that celestial virgins are preparing garlands of flowers and weaving a laurel wreath for his solemn coronation in heaven. And Camões, so anxious to declare to his spiritual sweetheart that he loves her in death more than he loved her in life, and being full of fear lest she should forget the beautiful and idyllic past, addresses her shade with words of sweet and tender affection : “ Gentle Spirit, who so early didst depart from this vale of tears, live for ever in the midst of heavenly joys, and let me linger here to feed the lonely anguish of my heart. If in the happy world above remembrance of this mortal life endures, then, prithee, forget not the ardent flame of love, which once blazed in my eyes for thee.”

Alma minha gentil, que te partiste
 Tão cedo desta vida descontente ;
 Repousa lá no ceo eternamente,
 E viva eu cá na terra sempre triste.
 Se lá no assento Ethereo, onde subiste,
 Memoria desta vida se consente,
 Não te esqueças d’aquelle amor ardente,
 Que já nos meus olhos tão puro viste.

And overcome by a desire for spiritual union with his Beatrice in heaven, Camões continues to address the shade :

"Pray to God, my love, who took thee early to His rest, that it may please Him to take me to see thy face as soon as He has removed thee from my eyes :"

Roga a Deus que teus annos encurtou
Que tão cedo de cá me leve a ver-te,
Quão cedo de meus olhos te levou.

While the illusions of life are thus one by one vanishing in the darkness of night that has overtaken him, while fresh sorrows and misfortunes intensify the agony of his heart, while the ingratitude of his country weighs heavy on his mind, Camões, broken down more by sufferings than age, yearns to return to his native land, to his household gods, to his friends and relations, if he has any, to relate to them, before he dies, what strange seas he has visited, what skies and peoples he has seen :

O prazer de chegar a patria cara,
A seus penates caros, e parentes,
Para contar a peregrina e rara
Navegação, os varios céos e gentes.

Lus. IX, 17.

Such was more or less the condition of the poet's mind, when Pedro Barreto, who was about to set out for Africa to assume the reins of the government of Moçambique, invited him to sail with himself, promising to defray the expenses of his voyage. Camões, who was poor and reduced to a state of utter destitution, accepted the invitation with alacrity, believing that eventually he would be able to make his way to his native land, *saudades* of which had now taken possession of his entire heart. During the time that the poet lived in Africa, that is, from the end of the year 1567 to November 1569, it is probable that he revised and gave a finishing touch to the *Lusiads*, composing also some of those beautiful and pathetic sonnets, wherein he gives vent to the anguish of his soul.

Faria e Sousa has left us some account of what happened in Moçambique to "the singularly favoured by heaven and abused by man, Luis de Camões, the terror of the common poets of Europe." This eminent Spanish biographer of the poet accuses Pedro Barreto of having taken him to Moçambique, not to offer him any facilities to proceed to Portugal, but to keep him in his own service and take advantage of his genius. How far this accusation is true we cannot say, and there are biographers who deny that Pedro Barreto was guilty of such monstrous behaviour towards Camões. At all events, it is clear that the life of the poet was far from happy in Africa, and his sufferings became more and more intense exactly at the time when he was in need of some relief for the physical and moral exhaustion of his life. Thus for some time Camões depended upon the tender mercies of Pedro Barreto, who is said to have utilised his services for his own benefit, and Faria e Sousa regrets that "a person whom God had created great, yet without power, should see himself reduced to depend upon and to be the amusement of others, to whom fortune had dispensed power without greatness." Where in this wide, wide world was Camões to find a safe corner to rest his head in peaceful repose, since life on all sides is beset with countless perils? :—

Oh grandes e gravissimos perigos !
 Oh caminho da vida nunca certo !
 Que aonde a gente põe sua esperança,
 Tenha a vida tão pouca segurança !

.....

No mar tanta tormenta, e tanto dano,
 Tantas vezes a morte apercebida !
 Na terra tanta guerra, tanto engano,
 Tanta necessidade aborrecida !
 Onde póde acolher-se um fraco humano ?
 Onde terá segura a curta vida ?
 Que não se arme, e se indigne o céu sereno
 Contra um bicho da terra tão pequeno ?

O piteous lot of man's uncertain state !
 What woes on life's unhappy journey wait !
 When joyful hope would grasp its fond desire,
 The long-sought transports in the grasp expire !
 By sea what treacherous calms, what rushing storms,
 And death attendant in a thousand forms !
 By land what strife, what plots of secret guile,
 How many a wound from many a treacherous smile!
 O where shall man escape his numerous foes,
 And rest his weary head in safe repose !

Lus. I, 105-6.

At last, one fine day in the year 1569, some ships that were proceeding from Goa to Portugal, anchored off Moçambique, and among the several men sailing in these vessels were Duarte de Abreu, Antonio Cabral, Antonio Serrão, Luiz da Veiga, Heitor da Silveira, and Diogo de Couto, who were on terms of excellent friendship with Camões. Dom Antão de Naronha had died, expressing his wish, to quote Oliveira Martins, that one of his arms be cut off from his body and taken to Ceuta to be buried by the side of his uncle Dom Nuno Alvares, and one of the ships that cast anchor in the waters of Moçambique conveyed this precious relic. The condition in which the great poet was found by his friends in Africa was wretched as it could be, and generations have read with respectful sympathy and admiration the following lines written by Diogo de Couto in his Eighth Decade: "At Moçambique we found that prince of the poets of his time, my messmate and friend Luis de Camões, so poor that he was supported by his friends; and, to enable him to embark for home, we furnished him with such clothes as he stood in need of, and took care that he should not want provisions. In the winter that he passed at Moçambique, he prepared his *Lusiads* for the press, and wrote much in a book he was making, which was entitled *Parnasso de Luis de*

Camões, a work of great erudition, learning, and philosophy, which was stolen from him, and concerning which, although I made much enquiry, I could never hear anything in the kingdom." No biographer has so far been able to give us any further information about the work mentioned above. Dom José Maria de Sousa is inclined to believe that the work in question was a collection of lyrical compositions, but Faria e Sousa suggests that it was completely a new work. All that we know for certain is that the manuscript in question was never found, nor has any one been able to say what became of it. If, however, it was totally a new work of Camões, and if, according to Diogo de Couto, it was "a work of great erudition, learning, and philosophy," then the literature of the world is certainly the poorer for its loss. But to sufficiently appreciate and admire Camões, we do not require anything more than the *Lusiads*, every line of which bears a clear impression of the master mind that conceived and produced it.

After a short stay at Moçambique, the friends of Camões decided to re-embark on their ships and sail for Portugal, whereupon Camões, who had long been a victim to the tyranny of men and circumstances, expressed his wish to accompany them. As soon as, however, Pedro Barreto was apprised of the intentions of the poet, he tried to ensnare him in a Shylock's net and demanded two hundred cruzados, which, he said, he had spent on his behalf. This cold and unfeeling attitude of Barreto roused the friends of Camões to a point of virtuous indignation, and Heitor da Silveira and his fellow-companions immediately paid the miserable governor of Moçambique the money demanded by him, so that, as Faria e Sousa says, "the person of Luis de Camões and the honour of Pedro Barreto were at the same time sold for this price."

At last towards the end of the year 1569, the Portuguese vessels, that were in the waters of Moçambique, weighed anchor

and left for their destination, Camões and Diogo de Couto sailing in the ship *Santa Clara*. The winds and the sea favoured the voyage, and the elements themselves bade god-speed to the poet and his friends :

Podeis-vos embarcar (que tendes vento
E mar tranquillo) para a patria amada.

Lus. X, 143.

The return voyage of Camões to his native shores was singularly peaceful and happy. This time, however, his mind was no longer open to the inspiration of the rocky Cape and the mighty Atlantic ; for like a chrysalis which in time lets out the insect and becomes lifeless, so the mind of the poet had already emptied its epic ideas into the golden pages of the *Lusiads* and was now at rest. The one consuming desire of the heart of Camões was now to see his own dear country and to take leave of this life for ever, where he had first saluted it. And so he rejoiced to think that, as his ship sailed on cutting through the waters of the Atlantic, he was coming closer and closer to his *ditosa patria amada* :

Cortando vão as náus a larga via
Do mar ingente para a patria amada.

Lus. IX, 51.

And after a safe and peaceful voyage, the winds ever blowing calm over a tranquil sea, Camões sighted the land of his birth, the cradle of his earliest joys, the grave of his youthful loves and hopes, the everlasting dream of his poetic mind :

Assim foram cortando o mar sereno
Com vento sempre manso, e nunca irado,
Ate que houveram vista do terreno
Em que nasce ram, sempre desejado.

Lus. X, 144.

But alas! The cruel destiny of Camões was too vigilant to lose sight of her unfortunate victim, for she made the heart of the poet bleed afresh exactly at the time, when he was overcome by a feeling of joy at the sight of his native shores. Scarcely had Camões and his party seen the blue hills of Cintra, when Heitor da Silveira, the most intimate friend of the poet, expired on boardship, and then came the fatal news that Lisbon had been reduced to a scene of desolation and death by the ravages of bubonic plague—a fact which was brought home to the poet and his fellow-companions, when their ships were forbidden to enter the Tagus and were detained at Cascaes. Camões was thus left to himself to meditate on the sad and bitter realities of human existence and to sigh with Virgil: *Sunt lacrymae rerum.*

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PLAGUE OF LISBON AND THE PUBLICATION OF THE LUSIADS.

E foi, que de doença crúa e feia,
A mais que eu nunca vi, desampararam
Muitos a vida,.....

Lus. V. 81.

And many died of the most cruel and foul disease that I ever saw.

Sixteen years of sufferings and disappointments tell the story of the life of Camões in the East, and bring into relief the tragedy of his existence. Time, however, and excessive patriotism of his heart had made him forget the ingratitude of his country and forgive the many cruelties she had inflicted upon him. He could no longer make up his mind to use the cursing

words of Scipio : *ingrata patria, non possidebis ossa mea*. But from the very depths of his heart he now cried out : *esta he a ditosa patria minha amada*. Natercia's death had obliterated from his mind all the bitter memories of disappointed love. He was too noble to call her 'Natercia cruel,' now that she was no more. He loved her in death more than he had ever loved her in life, and often addressed her spirit in sweet and gentle words as *alma minha gentil*. This lovely girl was once the fond dream of his youth and the Beatrice of his verses. Alas ! this beautiful rose of his heart had already faded for ever, though the perfume was still there, and it was now to him only a mystic image of his poetic ideals, a transcendental proof of the immortality of the human soul.

After completing his voluntary exile of so many years, characterised by tragic vicissitudes of life and countless misfortunes, Camões returned to his native land to enjoy some peace and tranquillity in the last days of his existence and to carry out the only surviving desire of his heart—the publication of the *Lusiads*. But never was the unhappy poet more foiled in his hopes and disappointed in his expectations than he was when, on his arrival in his native waters, he learnt that the city of Lisbon, over the memories of which he had wept under the palms of India, on the dry sands of Arabia, in his grotto at Macao, and by the banks of the Mekong—that this city was reduced to a scene of desolation and death. Camões looked towards Lisbon, and under a spell of pessimism read what was writ large before his eyes : *vanitas vanitatum et omnia vania*

In the spring of 1569 Lisbon witnessed the first signs of the terrible bubonic plague, which for one year continued to spread death and desolation in every home of the city. Panic and confusion took possession of the rich as well as the poor. Royalty shifted its court and residence to Almeirim. The well-to-do

classes evacuated the city in haste and confusion. The merchant and the trader deserted their work and fled wherever they could. The working man and the farmer abandoned the factory and the field and let themselves either starve or die. Meanwhile, the plague continued to rage more furiously than ever, and went on spreading throughout the length and breadth of Lisbon like wild fire. Men and women and children were falling off like autumn leaves. Death was everywhere triumphant. And the city resounded with the groans of the poor and the gasping cries of the dying.

In 1568, one year before the plague broke out, a grave economic crisis had disturbed the peace of Portuguese life and reduced the poor classes to a condition of utter helplessness. "When the first signs of this fatal scourge appeared," writes Oliveira Martins, "the people saw in it the punishment for the evils of the previous year, when the government had reduced the value of copper to one third of its actual worth in order to meet the situation created by the entry into Portugal of false copper coins, which the English sent to us in barrels of flour and casks of nails, carrying from here whatever gold and silver they could." This drastic measure, though adopted to combat the incursions of the false coin above referred to, reacted on the poorer classes in a most terrible manner, rendering their state one of utter despair. The misery of the people rapidly increased and the situation foreboded an evil day for the country as a whole. Some were driven to despair and committed suicide, others surrendered themselves to the sufferings of penury and starvation, and all cursed the authorities for having precipitated them into an abyss of wretchedness. The miseries of the people swelled and rose to fatal proportions. There were persistent rumours that Lisbon was going to be destroyed in 1569 by an earthquake, and when, instead of the expected catastrophe, the plague appeared, the people took no time to believe that the doom of the city was at hand.

The plague carried the sufferings of the people to a point of agony. Lisbon was converted into a vast scene of death and threatened with total ruin and extinction. People slept never to wake up again in the morning, or were knocked down by death, even while they talked to one another in the streets. Some corpses were buried in heaps, others were rotting by the road-side or in the field. Criminals were set free to dispose of the dead, no other men being available to do this ghastly work. Lisbon seemed to be on the point of being annihilated. Everything reminded one of destruction and death, and everywhere could be heard the groans and lamentations of the dying. From five hundred to six hundred persons fell every day, and in one year Lisbon is said to have lost seventy thousand souls of its population. One could go from one end of the city to another without coming across ten men to find that the Portuguese metropolis was alive!

At the time when Camões arrived in Portugal, Lisbon was practically free from this scourge. The *Santa Clara*, which conveyed the poet to his native land, cast anchor at Cascaes, and had to remain there for sometime, as on account of the plague no vessel was allowed to enter the Tagus without permission from the king. Diogo de Couto was therefore sent to Almeirim to obtain the necessary permission, and as soon as orders were received, the ship entered into the waters of the river, which in former years had exercised so much influence on the life and education of the poet. The first two years after his return to Portugal mark a period of complete silence in the life of Camões, nor has it pleased him to tell us what his heart felt, when his patriotic eyes surveyed the desolate scenes of his beloved Lisbon, this Sion of his imagination, over the memories of which he had shed so many fond tears during his extensive travels in the East. Perhaps he gave vent to his feelings in the touching words of Jeremiah: how doth the city sit solitary that once was full of people? How hath the mistress of nations become a widow?

Apart from the ravages of the plague, a great change had taken place in the political situation of the country. Dom João III had died in 1557 after a brilliant reign of five and thirty years, leaving behind him a name that will for ever occupy a unique place in the history of great kings. The ruling sovereign was Dom Sebastião, a self-willed youth of impetuous nature and sinister destiny, *maravilha fatal da nossa idade*, as Camões himself has so appropriately characterised him. This youthful king took the reins of government into his own hands in 1568, when he was barely in the middle of his teens, and at once began to play fast and loose with his imagination by trying to carry out schemes of impossible imperialism. Imbued with passionate patriotism and love of national traditions to a point of fanaticism, ardently devoted to the culture of arts and letters, brave, adventurous, and gifted with a wild and romantic imagination, this youthful king seems to have appealed to the mind of Camões as a dangerous embodiment of the imperialistic ideas, which were the cause at once of the rise and decline of his country's power. We shall have occasion to examine more at length the work and character of this luckless sovereign in the next chapter, which substantially tells the story of his life.

As already said above, the first two years after the return of Camões to Portugal passed away in silence, and at the close of this uneventful period the world of letters was given an opportunity to appreciate and admire a work, produced by the genius of one man, though it embodied the genius of a whole race. The traditions of Portugal were so long lying scattered in the individual minds of the nation : her history was preserved by the collective memory of her people. Camões only collected, sifted, and coordinated these scattered elements, and, like a master artist who mixes up a few colours and produces a picture of transcendental beauty, so did he sublimate these materials and crystallise them into an epic poem, which wedded the spirit

of the classic ages to that of his own times. The *Lusiads* was published in 1572 and was hailed by the nation at large as a Bible of patriotism and as a sacred depository of her traditions and history, while in due course of time it circulated throughout the whole world the meaning and message of the Portuguese civilisation. The publication of the *Lusiads* marked a unique event in the history of the national life of Portugal, not only because this soul-stirring epic was an interpretation of the heroic character of the Portuguese race, but because it was brought to light at the time, when the Portuguese nation was about to breathe the last breath of her political existence, leaving the *Lusiads* behind to write an epitaph on her grave and to serve as an eternal monument to her heroic work in behalf of humanity.

The success of the *Lusiads* was as immediate as it was complete. The nation saw in it a reflection of her own soul, since every line of this great epic had a secret of the Portuguese heart to reveal. The divine stanzas of this epic traced the course of the stream of heroic patriotism, which gushed out forever from the national heart of Portugal, and whose invigorating waters encouraged her sons to perform the deeds sung in lofty strain by the poet, who was a complete incarnation of the national soul. All classes of Portuguese Society looked upon Camões as the inspired writer of the national Bible, and the respect and homage paid to him marked the climax of universal love and admiration. Camões found himself lost not only in the plaudits of the multitude, but also in the praises of the king, nobles, and courtiers. Every one looked at him and wondered how this great patriot poet, who had come from the very ends of the world, loaded with sorrows and misfortunes, had still sufficient fire in his heart to inflame the hearts of others with patriotism and to refresh and invigorate the drooping mind of the nation with the memories of its great and glorious past. So great was the success of the *Lusiads* that it had to be printed twice in the

same year. And Pedro da Costa Perestrello, who is said to have been a poet of some celebrity, and had himself written an epic on the *Descobrimento de Vasco da Gama*, gave up the idea of publishing his work, when he saw that the master mind of Camões had covered the same ground in an inimitable manner. For the universal feeling of the country was that Camões was a perfect incarnation of the national soul and that the *Lusiads* itself was a Bible of the great religion of the Portuguese heart : patriotism. Let us listen to the verdict of Faria e Sousa, who devoted twenty years of his existence to the study of the *Lusiads*, on the success of this divine epic. "It is certain, says he, that these writings (the *Lusiads*) were highly esteemed during the life of the poet, and for this reason he was looked upon with admiration by every one in Lisbon. Whenever he was seen in any street, men and women would stand still to look at him until he had disappeared from their sight."

These remarks are liable to delude the reader into the belief that the fortunes of Camões had undergone a sudden change, and that he now lived a very comfortable and prosperous life in the midst of national applause and sympathy. Far from it. Like the Jews, who secretly admired the saintliness of Christ, and yet clamoured for His blood and crucifixion, so did the Portuguese people conspire to intensify the tragedy of the poet's existence even when they saw he had sacrificed his whole self for the good of his country. The *hosannas* which the nation showered upon him proved to be mere lip utterances and did not in the least mitigate the inexorable decree of his destiny : *Crucifige eum, crucifige eum*. The publication of the *Lusiads* brought renown to Camões and not fortune, which he himself had predicted would come to pass, for he speaks of himself as

.....aquelle, cuja lyra sonora

Será mais afamada, que ditosa

Lus. X, 128.

The Portuguese nation was at this time hastening towards economic and political ruin and was every day being haunted by sinister forebodings about her future existence. The king, on the other hand, instead of concentrating his activities on setting his own house in order, let himself be carried away by his ambition to conquer the Crescent with the Cross in Morocco. And while the nation was sinking under the weight of grave economic and political evils, and the king was in the delirium of his quixotic schemes, Camões was living the last years of his sad and tragic existence in a humble dwelling, rendered conspicuous only by the visits of such persons as were induced by curiosity and by feelings of hero-worship to see the national Bard. In the declining years of his life, when the hopes and dreams of his youth were lying buried in his memory, Camões is said to have sought recreation, and perhaps religious comfort, in the company of the divines of the convent of St. Dominic, situated in the neighbourhood of his residence, and to have attended theological lectures at the said convent, taking his seat, as Faria e Sousa says, side by side with students. As for the attitude of Dom Sebastião towards the great poet, let us view it in the light of the authority of an eminent English biographer of Camões. Says John Adamson : "Notwithstanding the glory which Portugal acquired by the poem of Camões, and its dedication to Sebastian, who is represented by his biographers to have been a prince of a generous disposition, the pension granted to the bard was only fifteen thousand reis, which, according to the exchange at par between this country (England) and Portugal (1820), would produce only four pounds three shillings and nine pence ; and which would, supposing money to have then exceeded its present value five times, have been worth little more than twenty pounds." This annual pension was given to Camões in return for his *Lusiads*, the price of which cannot possibly be stated in terms of pounds, shillings and pence. It is clear that by this single act of theirs both the king and the minis-

ters gave a full measure of their own worthlessness and of their absolute incompetence to do justice to Camões, but for whose brilliant genius Portugal might have never possessed that great written document, on the strength of which she will always be able to assert her rightful claims for a high place among the civilised nations of the world. To make matters still more ridiculous, this trifle of a pension was limited, *inter alia*, by the condition that the pension decree should be renewed every six months, according to some biographers, and every three years, according to others.

Camões himself was painfully conscious of the treatment meted out to him by those that were in power, but his soul was too noble to let him give vent to his feelings by using any abusive language against them. He only called upon the nymphs of the Tagus, who had roused up and sustained the poetic fervour of his heart, to bear witness to the injustice done to him by his countrymen, who so ill rewarded the services of one, who had sung the national glories of their race in epic numbers. What encouragement could future writers draw from examples like these to do any meritorious work such as he himself had accomplished ?

Vêde, nymphas, que engenhos de senhores
 O vosso Tejo cria valerosos,
 Que assi sabem prezar com taes favores
 Aquem os faz cantando gloriosos !
 Que exemplos a futuros escriptores,
 Para espertar engenhos curiosos,
 Para pôrem as cousas em memoria,
 Que merecerem ter eterna gloria !

Lus. VII, 82.

But the sufferings of our poet, undergone by him with serene and heroic resignation, spread a halo of eternal light around his

name and mark him out to be the greatest martyred patriot of Portugal, whose memory is at once an object of hero-worship and a symbol of patriotism to us all.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TRAGEDY OF ALCACER-KIBIR.

Oh gloria de mandar ! oh vã cobiça
 Desta vaidade a quem chamamos fama !
 Oh fraudulento gosto que se atiça
 C' uma aura popular, que honra se chama !
 Que castigo tamanho e que justiça
 Fazes no peito vão que muito te ama !
 Que mortes, que perigos, que tormentas,
 Que crueldades nelles exp'rimentas !

*O frantic thirst of honour and of fame,
 The crowd's blind tribute, a fallacious name !
 What stings, what plagues, what secret scourges curst,
 Torment those bosoms where thy pride is nurst !
 What dangers threaten, and what deaths destroy
 The hapless youth, whom thy vain gleams decoy !*

Lus. IV, 95.

Let us now proceed to take a fugitive view of what is out and out one of the most fascinating, and withal the most fateful, events in the history of Portugal, namely, the disastrous expedition of King Sebastian to Africa and the battle of Alcacer-Kibir, at once the grave of this king and the ruin of his nation. This event, which had a tragic effect on the life of Camões, hastened the end of his existence and led to the political extinction of his country, the *Lusiads* alone remaining behind as an

eternal vindication of the national glories of Portugal. The magnitude of this occurrence and its bearings on the life of the poet make it necessary that a birdseye view should be taken of the political situation that culminated in a Portuguese Waterloo on the soil of Africa.

The national life of Portugal in the heroic period of her history was characterised by an ardent passion for discovery, conquest, and propagation of the Christian Faith, stretched to the point of fanaticism. Schemes of lofty imperialism were allied to a policy of religious absolutism, and the Cross was invariably the complement of the sword. The capture of Ceuta in 1415 and the subsequent discovery of several unknown parts of Africa by Portuguese mariners led the immortal Prince Henry to dream of a "Greater Portugal" in the Dark Continent. As, however, the Portuguese heroes of the sea vied with one another to continue the work of discovery, and Vasco da Gama made his epoch-making voyage to India *por mares nunca dantes navegados*, the centre of gravity of the Portuguese political ambition shifted towards the East, and the wonderful achievements of the great Albuquerque made it impossible for Portugal to turn her eyes away from her oriental possessions. In view of these developments, every successive Portuguese king was compelled to give a secondary place to Africa in the political programme of the State, until at length, when the power of the nation had already begun to dwindle both at home and abroad, King Sebastian's evil genius made him set his heart on a very extensive campaign in Africa.

The Portuguese nation was both politically and economically in a very precarious plight, and both the masses and the better classes were seething with growing discontent. King Sebastian had led his first expedition to Africa in 1574 without achieving any good result, but had returned with the fond conviction

that he could easily subdue the Moors and bring them under his power. And so in 1578, when a suitable opportunity arose, the young king decided to lead another expedition, ostensibly to support the claims of his ally, Maula Ahmed, to the throne of Morocco, but really with the intention of establishing the imperial suzerainty of Portugal over this kingdom. Sober and patriotic men tried to dissuade the adventurous sovereign from embarking on such a rash undertaking at a time when the country was ill prepared to meet its cost and responsibilities, but the king turned an indifferent ear to their prudent counsels, dismissed from the court his excellent adviser, Dom Aleixo de Menezes, and lent a fond ear to the parasites that cooperated with him to materialise the fatal schemes which led up to the Moroccan expedition. In the mad excitement of his reckless policy the king refused to take into account the political and economic chaos into which the nation had drifted. Every day the misfortunes of the country were increasing in mass and intensity, and it seemed that some evil genius was at work to bring about the downfall of this land of glorious and heroic traditions. In 1568 an economic crisis, precipitated by the depreciation of copper coinage, had dealt a staggering blow to the poorer classes; in 1569 and 1570 the plague had reduced Lisbon to a scene of desolation and death, leaving behind tragic recollections in the minds of the people; in 1572 a great tempest had destroyed the armada sent to help Charles IX against the Turks and the Protestants; in 1573 the city of Lisbon was deluged by a flood; in 1577 a strange comet had appeared in the heavens, the popular imagination reading in this phenomenon prognostics of a great national disaster. Apart from these catastrophes and sinister omens, the nation was seething with discontent; the town and the country alike were at the mercy of famine and poverty; beggars and lepers everywhere gave a visible demonstration of the living tragedy of national life.

Despite, however, these gruesome conditions at home, the king persisted in maturing his schemes with such recklessness and

haste as marked him out to be a ruler that had taken leave of his senses. Fortune had blessed Dom Sebastião with one hand and cursed him with another. Never before had a throne been occupied by a young king at once so brave and active, gifted with such extraordinary capacity for work and suffering, but to these qualities were unfortunately allied a stubborn and self-willed nature, an impetuous temper, and a passionate love for hazardous and dramatic enterprises ; and we may say that this prince was better gifted to be a leader of adventurous mountaineers than the king of a nation at a most critical period of its existence. "The young king," says Morse Stephens, "was rather German than Portuguese in appearance, with his blue eyes and fair hair and his face disfigured by the Hapsburg lip, and in his nature there was much of the Teuton dreaminess and love of the marvellous, which impelled him to take part in rash undertakings." And to complete the fatal side of his character "with his German dreaminess he united a truly Spanish fanaticism." It is no wonder, then, that this prince, who combined "German dreaminess" with "Spanish fanaticism," eagerly availed himself of the opportunity that offered itself to him to play the adventurer and the crusader at one, and at the same time.

The king's enthusiasm in his enterprise ran so high that he would suffer nothing to come between his ambitious schemes and their realisation. The state treasury was empty, the king knew it ; but means were soon devised to exploit the nation and to make it pay for his military orgies in Africa. Every effort was made and every device employed to procure the money requisite to defray the cost of the royal adventure. Salt was declared a state monopoly and a new source of income was thus created to swell the exchequer. The Pope was asked to issue a special bull, and by this means a large sum of money was raised. But more money was still wanting. A fresh appeal was made to the Pope, and His Holiness obliged his royal friend by granting him a share of some ecclesiastical revenues. The clergy, of course, protested, though they had by no means been slow to

in flame the crusading passions of the king. The king, however, remained indifferent to the clamour of the priest and the bishop, and even went so far as to grant the Jews some privileges in return for a lump sum of money. The king's conduct shocked the feelings of the Christian population, and called forth a protest from the Holy Office of Inquisition. But king Sebastian would pay no heed to anything that interfered with the course of his absolute will. The tale is not yet done. The king ignored the will of the people by employing some extraordinary measures to levy money without the sanction of the *Côrtes*, which had by that time ceased to act as a constitutional check on the extravagances of the sovereign.

The year 1578 gave rise to such scenes as had seldom before been witnessed in Lisbon. Everywhere could be seen sights of dazzling splendour, but nowhere any signs of military organisation or efficiency. The preparations for the African expedition made one believe that the king was going to celebrate his wedding rather than conduct a campaign in hostile territory. Every day the expeditionary forces poured into the city from all quarters of Europe and gave an exhibition of their rich uniforms and splendid weapons rather than of their martial abilities. These forces were made up of Portuguese recruits and Spanish adventurers, Italian auxiliaries and German bravos. There was neither harmony nor discipline in this heterogeneous body of men, brought together to serve the will of the *maravilha fatal da nossa idade*. Streets were decorated with flags and arches, houses with flowers and festoons, the court with rich and luxurious ornaments. There were festive parties, reckless amusements, sham fights, dances and state dinners, and to these scenes the behaviour of the expeditionary forces added a touch of the ridiculous and the burlesque.

The king was restlessly active by day and by night, and seemed to celebrate the success of his arms in anticipation, forgetting that victories are celebrated, not before, but after they

are won. He was no doubt cock-sure of his triumph in Africa and made every one believe that his expedition to Morocco would be a military holiday to the national arms. The royal enthusiast even ordered a gold crown to be made to be used by him on his proclamation as Emperor of Morocco, and Fr. Fernão da Silva is said to have prepared a sermon in anticipation to celebrate the victory of Portuguese arms !

The year soon advanced as far as the middle of June. The time for the armada to set sail was at hand. The blessings of God were therefore invoked to give a religious semblance to the work of man. The Archbishop consecrated the national Flag in the cathedral of Lisbon in the midst of dazzling splendour. Diogo Bernardes wrote a sonnet to sing the victory of the Portuguese arms and dedicated it "to the Standard which the king carried on his voyage to Africa with Christ crucified on it." And when everything was ready, king Sebastian sent for the sword and shield of the immortal Dom Affonso Henriques that were preserved in the convent of Santa Cruz in Coimbra. And so on the 25th of June, 1578, the splendid armada consisting of eight hundred and fifty ships and carrying the flower of the Portuguese nobility, not to say anything of the rank and file, set sail for Africa. To what new disasters does ambition lead these people? To what dangers and deaths does it invite them under the guise of some fascinating promises? What wealth and kingdoms does it offer them? What triumphs? What palms? What victories?

A que novos desastres determinas
De levar estes reinos, e esta gente?
Que perigos, que mortes lhe destinas
Debaixo d'algum nome preeminente?
Que promessas de reinos, e de minas
D'ouro, que lhe farás tão facilmente?
Que famas lhe prometteras? que historias?
Que triumphos? que palmas? que victorias?

We have seen enough of the political and administrative blunders of Dom Sebastião. In the remaining part of this chapter we shall rapidly examine the military blunders of this unfortunate king—blunders which culminated in his own death and in the ruin of his country. The Portuguese armada, which set sail from the Tagus at the beginning of the last week of June, reached off Tangier at the end of the first week of July, and thence proceeded to Arzilla, where the troops disembarked and pitched their tents outside the city. Even here, strange to believe, the camp was reduced to a scene of revelry and burlesque amusements. Discipline there was none in the army that was made up of several divisions of different nationalities, brought together by no common aims or common interests, and severally led by their respective commanders, the generalissimo being the young king, to whom his own absolute will was a code of naval and military science. A few miles to the south of Arzilla was the beautiful city of Larache, which the Portuguese decided to capture. Two courses were open to Dom Sebastião to take possession of this place: either to re-embark and, sailing southwards, to make a naval attack on Larache, or to march by land under difficult and risky conditions and occupy the aforesaid city. Military experts pressed upon Dom Sebastião the adoption of the former course, but the king, who was ever fond of novelty and adventure and treated with contempt the dictates of military common sense, decided to advance by land and to offer a pitched battle to the enemy in an open plain before he marched upon Larache. The king was informed in time that the enemy was strong in men and provisions, that it would be a great military blunder to advance inland leaving the fleet far behind, and that a pitched battle would redound to the advantage of the enemy. Moreover, Dom Sebastião was apprised of the fact that there were great dissensions in the enemy's camp, and that Maula Abdel Malik, the actual ruler of Morocco, against whom the Portuguese were

at war, was poisoned by one of his own adherents and was slowly but surely dying. On the strength of these facts the advisers of Dom Sebastião tried to persuade him at least to postpone the battle for a few days, if he did not mean to give it up altogether, so that the death of the ruler of Morocco, who was an able leader and exercised great influence over his followers, might precipitate confusion and disorder in the camp of the enemy and give the Portuguese almost a bloodless victory. But Dom Sebastião was too impatient to be persuaded not to join battle. He therefore gave orders to march immediately to meet the enemy with provisions to last only for five days, and led his army towards Alcacer-Kibir, halting at last in the vast plain lying between the Mukzen and the Lukos. When Abdel Malik, who led his army in person but was in the throes of death, saw that the Portuguese king was inviting a pitched battle, he at once manœuvred his army with great ability and arranged it in a semi-circular form with the object of completely enveloping the Portuguese forces. The opposing armies array themselves in battle order on the 4th of August, and they meet one another with grave anxieties about the issue of the doubtful contest :

Já chegam as esquadras bellicosas
 Defronte das inimigas companhias,
 Que com grita grandissima os recebem ;
 E todas grande duvida concebem.

Lus. IV, 26.

The die is cast and the two armies join battle with feverish expectations : the one to defend its native soil, the other to conquer the same by force of arms :

Começa-se a travar a incerta guerra ;
 De ambas as partes se move a primeira ala ;
 Uns leva a defesa da propria terra,
 Outros as esperanças de ganhar-a.

Lus. IV, 30.

The sight of the enemy rouses the warlike spirit of Dom Sebastião, who throws himself into the thick of the battle with irresistible vigour and tenacity and, fighting like a lion in the front line, exposing himself to danger and death with heroic carelessness of life, and leading his army onward and onward with superhuman courage, seems to address his soldiers those inspiring words, which Camões has put in the mouth of the hero of Aljubarrota :—

Vêdes-me aqui Rei vosso, e companheiro,
Que entre as lanças, e settas, e os arnezes
Dos inimigos corro, e vou primeiro :
Pelejae, verdadeiros portugueses.

Lus. IV, 38

The Portuguese fought like lions under the inspiring guidance of their young king, and the cavalry of the enemy began to retreat in disorder before the irresistible charge of Dom Sebastião and his gallant squadron. For a time the initiative rested in the hands of the Portuguese, and it seemed that the enemy were going to suffer a most crushing defeat, when on a sudden a sinister voice was heard from an unknown quarter : *Fall back ! Fall back !* No one has been able to tell us who was responsible for this treacherous utterance,—if it was treacherous at all—which precipitated disorder and confusion in the Portuguese ranks, the general impression being that some great disaster had taken place. After some time the fatal voice was heard again, and the Spanish, German, and Italian soldiers, that formed part and parcel of the army, immediately fell back, and so did the greater part of the Portuguese troops. The enemy at once wheeled round and took full advantage of the situation. Abdel Malik had already died of poison, but the news of his death was carefully concealed from his army. At the most critical time the Portuguese king hopelessly failed to restore

order in his ranks, for he was a good fighter but a bad general. The battle was lost. Rivers of best Portuguese blood watered the soil of Africa. Prisoners without number swelled the camp of the enemy. Alcacer-Kibir wrote a tale of sorrow and death, as Aljubarrota had written one of life and glory.

We have said many hard and harsh things about Dom Sebastião. We have criticised his actions with unsparing severity. We have held him responsible for the political and military blunders that culminated in his own death and the ruin of his nation. Let us now pause to pay our tribute of respect and admiration to the man, who up to the last breath of his mortal existence preserved intact the greatness and sanctity of the national traditions of heroism, and dying left behind a splendid example of a soldier's duty on the battlefield. When everything was lost, the king clearly saw his own death was certain. But he wished to die like a man, like a soldier, like a Portuguese—on the battlefield. The bulk of his troops were retreating in confusion. The defeat of his army was everywhere complete. The enemy were advancing in full strength. In the face, however, of these mighty odds and discouraging scenes, the young king made a heroic stand at the post of duty, and made a charge against the enemy with the fearlessness of a demi-god. The fine flower of the Portuguese nobility, bound to the person of the king by ties of loyal devotion, fought by his side with admirable valour, not so much to resist the enemy as to defend their beloved king. In the course of this heroic struggle some of the best sons of Portugal lost their precious lives, among them being the Duke of Aveiro, Dom Jayme de Bragança, Dom João de Mendonça and many others of the gallant band. Meanwhile, the battle was still going on, and the Portuguese ranks were being depleted more and more. One of his faithful adherents tried to persuade the king to surrender. "No," said the royal soldier, "death alone can take away my liberty." A little later Dom

Francisco de Mascarenhas approached him in despair and said : "My Lord, now it only remains for us to die." "Die we must," returned the king, "but let us die as slowly as we can." Again a devoted servant of the king tried to press him to escape by a passage lying open in the ranks of the enemy. "I am a soldier and not a coward," was the serene and dignified answer of the king. At last Dom Duarte de Menezes, who was carrying the royal Standard, fell into the hands of the enemy. The surviving Portuguese heroes fought with admirable bravery to save the Flag. Like Epaminondas, Dom Sebastião asked again and again whether the Flag was safe. Luiz de Britto finally succeeded in extricating himself from the fight with the Flag in his left hand and immediately ran up to the king. "Ah ! you have saved it !" exclaimed Dom Sebastião with an expression of unspeakable delight on his face. "Let us embrace the Flag and die like patriots." And thus fell the most tragic hero of Alcacer-Kibir, and the Portuguese people for many years continued piously to believe that he was still alive, and handed down to memory many a strange legend about him. Let the historian judge as mercilessly as he can the conduct of Dom Sebastião in connection with his fatal expedition to Africa. Let the critic expose the political and military blunders of the king with ruthless severity. Let the philosopher stigmatise this sovereign as a religious fanatic and bigotted crusader. But let one and all shed a reverent tear over the memory of the royal hero, who redeemed the blunders and the failings on his life by dying as heroes alone can die.

The news of this great national disaster gave rise to scenes of indescribable sorrow and consternation in Portugal, and the country soon realised that her doom was at hand. All that was dear to the nation had come to grief in Africa—the king, the army, and the nobles. Only women and children, the old and the sick, were left behind to complete the national tragedy.

Some cursed the man, who was the first to make war in this world, others cursed the ambition of those who set out on conquering expeditions, leaving behind mothers and wives without their sons and husbands :

Alguns vão maldizendo, e blasphemando
Do primeiro, que guerra fez no mundo ;
Outros a sêde dura vão culpando
Do peito cubiçoso e sitibundo,
Que por tomar o alheio, o miserando
Povo aventura ás penas do profundo ;
Deixando tantas mães, tantas esposas
Sem filhos, sem maridos, desditosas.

Lus. IV, 44.

On the death of Dom Sebastião in Africa, Cardinal Henry, his uncle, succeeded to the vacant throne. The cardinal king was an old and feeble man and seemed to have been specially selected by Destiny to rule over his nation at a time, when the latter, like the king, had already lost her strength and vitality. The cardinal king died in 1580, and in the same year the Spanish forces invaded and took possession of Portugal. The period of Portuguese captivity lasted till 1640, when the united will of the Portuguese people cast off the yoke of foreign domination and the *Quinas* were again unfurled by the life-giving breeze of liberty, the nation at large hearing again the heartening echoes of the great struggle for national freedom : the battle of Aljubarrota. And once again

Deu signal a trombeta castelhana,
Horrendo, fero, ingente, e temeroso ;
Ouviu-o o monte Artábros ; e o Guadiana
Atraz tornou as ondas de medroso :
Ouviu- o o Douro, e a terra Transtagana ;
Correu ao mar o Tejo duvidoso :
E as mães que o som terribil escutaram,
Aos peitos os filhinhos apertaram.

Lus. IV, 28.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH OF THE NATIONAL BARD.

Em fim acabarei a vida, e verão todos que fui tão afeiçoado a minha patria, que não somente me contentei de morrer n'ella mas de morrer com ella.

At last I shall finish my life, and all shall see that I loved my country so much that not only was I contented to die in it, but also to die with it.

Enough has been said to show how the Portuguese Troy was burnt to ashes on the plains of Africa and how the vaulting ambition of an imperialistic sovereign overleapt itself and fell on the other side. It now only remains for us to go in search of the hero, who had already translated into epic verse the glories of his nation and was tuning his lyre again, if we are to believe some biographers, in order to celebrate the victories, which he thought would crown the exploits of King Sabastian in Morocco. It is clear that the poet was in spite of himself moved to a very high degree of optimism by the imperialistic ambition of his juvenile king, who, as we have already seen, came to grief under most tragic conditions, burying himself and the fortunes of his nation in the sun-burnt plains of Alcacer-Kibir. The African disaster was therefore a death-blow to the heart of Camões and marked the climax of the long series of illusions and disappointments, that tell the story of his life in mournful language. Camões took no time to realise that his nation had by its defeat in Africa given a most touching and visible illustration of the vanity of human hopes and wishes.

Throughout his sad existence he had been ever ready to serve his country sword in hand, *braço ás armas feito*, and with

his mind wedded to the Muses, *mente ás musas dada*. But now his hands were too feeble to wield the sword and the fatal news about the disaster of Alcacer-Kibir automatically silenced whatever was left of epic music in his mind.

Since the departure of the ill-starred expedition of king Sebastian for Africa, every man in Portugal cast a longing glance towards the Southern Continent and daily awaited to hear news about the final issue of the armada that had left the waters of the Tagus under doubtful auspices. And Camões, too, longed to hear of the success of the national arms, when he would celebrate the deeds of his King in such a way as to show him to be an equal of Alexander without his having, like the latter, to envy anything in Achilles :

A minha ja estimada e leda musa,
Fico que em todo o mundo de vós cante,
De sorte que Alexandre em vos se veja,
Sem a dita de Achilles ter inveja.

C. X. 156.

But alas ! The Fates are too cruel to let man cherish long the fond desires of his heart ! History furnishes us but few examples of great men, animated by such great hopes and overcome by such bitter disappointments as Camões, whose life is an eternal sermon on the truth that the bright sunrise of human life invariably ends in a sunset of illusions. And this fatal seed, sown in the life of every man by Destiny, found a rich and healthy soil in the existence of Camões, than whom we cannot cite a better example to illustrate the sport of fates with the lives of men.

Seated by the banks of the Tagus and the Mondego, Camões had at one time taken a prospective view of his career and rejoiced to think that so much sunshine was awaiting him in the great

avenues of life before him. But as years went by and our poet continued to tread along the thorny paths marked out to him by his destiny, he found it to his cruel disappointment that, like a mirage, the sunny spots were receding further and further away from him, until at last he reached a point where he found himself enveloped in a cloud of mist and darkness. Natercia, this lovely siren who had by her deceitful smiles first illuminated his mind, and whom his own genius had now converted into a vision of ideal purity, she had passed away from this life, leaving him behind to count, one by one, the fossilised remains of the once burning passion of his heart. India, this second sweetheart of Camões, as beautiful as his Catharina but more robust in the love she had to give and take from him, she too had belied his expectations and shaken his faith in the future destinies of his nation. And Sion, this ideal image of his Patria, of which he had so fondly dreamed when he was walking along the streets of his Babylon, this sweetheart of his too had fallen a victim to the plague and he had only seen her withered face, when he landed on his native shores after travelling over nearly seven thousand leagues in the East. And what little was left to him of life, hope, and national pride, had disappeared in the hot sands of Africa amid thunders and lightnings of Destiny, that had shown her power over man by burying the remnants of a heroic nation in a huge grave at Alcacer-Kibir. Nothing was therefore now left to the man who had learnt to love his Patria in the school of sorrows and misfortunes, to the soldier that had lost his eye in the service of his country, to the poet who had transformed the traditions of his race into an eternal song, except to invoke the name of the one tremendous reality of life—Death.

From 1578, the year of Portuguese defeat in Africa, to 1580, the year of Spanish occupation of Portugal, is a span of two years which tell the sad tale of the agony of our poet, who had now reached the culminating stage in the *via sacra* of his life.

These two years mark a period of tragic silence in the existence of Camões, who every moment expected his death and the political extinction of his country, which by heroic efforts had won and cemented its independence in the great national struggles of Ourique and Aljubarrota. Confined to his miserable cottage, destitute of food and clothing, lame and walking on crutches, Camões had but one man in all the world to give him what little help and comfort he could. This was his faithful Antonio, who alone, like St. John, had followed his master from the other end of the world up to the very summit of his Calvary; and served him with that sublime devotion which makes every admirer of Camões cherish the memory of his name with a feeling of love combined with respect and gratitude. We are told that the mother of our poet survived him in this life. If so, she evidently witnessed the closing scenes of the tragedy of her son's life. Such were the straits to which Camões was reduced in the last days of his existence that his faithful Antonio had to go out day and night in the streets of Lisbon to beg for alms to maintain the life of his master. And a woman by name Barbara—blessed be her name!—who was keeping a boarding house, used to occasionally send him a dish of food and sometimes small sums of money. O wretched misery! sublimated only by the stoic resignation of the great soul that patiently bore it!

Thanks to the zeal and patience of the early biographers of Camões, a few particulars have come down to us, which throw some side light on the last scenes of our poet's tragic existence. It has been handed down to memory that in the last days of the poet's life, Ruy Gonçalves da Camara asked him to translate some penitential psalms, whereupon Camões replied to him: *Quando eu fiz aquelles cantos, era mancebo, farto, namorado, e querido de muitos amigos e damas, o que me dava calor poetico; agora não tenho espirito, nem contentamento para nada: ahí está o meu jau que me pede duas moedas para carvão, e eu não as tenho para*

the dar. “When I wrote verses, I was young, had sufficient food, was a lover and was beloved by many friends and ladies, which made me feel poetical ardour : now I have neither the disposition nor peace of mind to do anything. Behold there my Javanese, who asks for two pieces to purchase coal, and I have them not to give him.” And when Camões saw that it was humanly impossible to revolt against or resist the cruelties of his miserable condition, he either wrote or dictated those memorable words, graced by all the beauty and sweetness of the resignation of Job. *Quem jamais ouvio dizer que em tão pequeno theatro, como o de um pobre leito, quizesse a fortuna representar tão grandes desventuras ? E eu, como se ellas não bastassem, me ponho ainda da sua parte ; porque procurar resistir a tantos males pareceria desavergonhamento.* “Who ever heard that in so small a theatre as that of a poor bed, fortune should wish to represent such great misfortunes ? And I, as if they were not sufficient, place myself on her side, because to endeavour to resist such ills would appear effrontery.”

Cardinal king Henry, who had the unique privilege to wear the crown of Portugal and a red hat of the Church, died at the end of January, 1580, without even having cared to take notice of Camões, who was undergoing the tragedy of his existence with heroic fortitude and passively resisting his cruel destiny by sheer force of resignation. The death of the cardinal king left the way open to the invasion of Portugal by Philip II of Spain for want of succession, and this cruel contingency broke the heart of Camões, who longed to die before the national flag was down. Seeing that everything was lost both to himself and to his country, our poet gave vent to the most predominant feeling of his heart in a few beautiful and inspiring words, wherein is preserved for us the perfume of his undying patriotism : *Em fim acabarei a vida, e verão todos que fui tão afeiçoado a minha patria, que não somente me contentei de morrer nella, mas*

de morrer com ella. At last I shall finish my life, and all shall see that I loved my country so much that not only was I contented to die in it but also to die with it." And so on the 10th of June, 1580, after he had drunk to the last drop the bitter chalice of his destiny, passed away in silence from this life the great poet, the music of whose lyre has gained for him the crown of immortality :

Aquella cuja lyra sonora,
Será mais afamada, que ditosa.

The universe as a whole paid a solemn tribute to the departed great. Mountains lamented the death of the fallen hero and rivers wept over the memory of the darling that was no more :

Os altos promontorios o choraram,
E dos rios as aguas saudosas
Os semeados campos alagaram
Com lagrimas correndo piedosas.

C. III, 84.

The classic waters of the Ganges and the Indus mourned the loss of the Christian poet, and every land he had visited reverentially took part in the universal *De Profundis* :

Choram-te...o Gange e o Indo ;
Chorou-te toda a terra que pisaste.

C. X, 118.

And the angels of God assembled in heaven to celebrate the apotheosis of the life of Camões, whose pure soul was admitted to the eternal company of the Blessed with the accompaniment of songs and harmonies of the celestial choirs:

Mas os anjos do ceu, cantando e rindo,
Te recebem na gloria, que ganhaste.

C. X, 118.

The mortal remains of Camões were given a poor burial in the church of St. Anne in Lisbon, and neither a stone nor a cross marked the grave of the greatest man of genius Portugal has ever produced. Some biographers say that the poet died in his own little cottage even without the help of the comforting hand of his faithful Antonio, who had already died before his master, while others believe that he expired in a hospital. The latter opinion is supported by the testimony of Frei José Indio, who is said to have written on a copy of the *Lusiads*, which afterwards became the property of Lord Holland, the following words: "What a lamentable thing to see so great a genius so ill rewarded! I saw him die in a hospital in Lisbon, without having a sheet to cover himself, after having triumphed in the East Indies, and sailed 5500 leagues! What good advice for those, who weary themselves night and day in study without profit, as the spider weaves its web to catch flies." If this evidence can be accepted as authentic, then it can admit of no doubt that Camões died in some hospital in Lisbon, and died so poor that he had not even a sheet that might be called his own! This is the tragic lot of those, who sacrifice their precious lives to the service of their King and Country:

Morrer nos hospitaes, em pobres leitos,

Os que ao Rei e á lei servem de muro.

C. X, 23.

Sixteen years after the death of Camões, Dom Gonçalo Coutinho diligently searched for his grave and succeeded in finding it with great difficulty, after which he had the precious remains of the immortal Bard transferred to a prominent place in the centre of the church, covering the fresh resting place with a marble slab bearing the following inscription:

Aqui jaz Luis de Camoes,
 Principe dos poetas do seu tempo
 Viveo pobre e miseravelmente,
 E assi morreo
 Anno de MDLXXIX
 Esta campa lhe mandou aqui
 Por D. Goncalo Coutinho,
 Na qual se nao enterrara
 Pessoa alguma.

Here lies Luis de Camoes,
 Prince of the Poets of his time
 He lived poor and miserable,
 And so he died,
 In the year MDLXXIX
 D. Goncalo Coutinho ordered
 This stone to be placed here,
 Under which
 No other person should be buried.

The earthquake of 1755 totally destroyed the roof of the Church of St. Anne, and the greater part of the pavement below was practically annihilated. The church was repaired in due course of time, but none cared to do the least little to trace the sacred spot, where the remains of Camões were laid to rest. In 1835, however, a society called *Sociedade dos Amigos das Lettras* was established in Lisbon, and Castilho, one of its most distinguished members, proposed that organised measures be taken to

search for the resting place of Camões that was looked upon as permanently lost since the earthquake. The work was entrusted to a special commission, and after a laborious search the grave of the poet was identified, or at least piously believed to have been identified. During the centenary celebrations of 1880 the ashes of Camões were translated with national solemnity to the Church of Belem, to which event a fuller reference will be made in one of the following chapters.

Thus ended the career, chequered with misfortunes but crowned with glory, of the great man and poet, who, as John Adamson so happily observes, is represented by his biographers to have been, like Homer, blind and poor, with a cloud of uncertainty hanging over his birth; like Dante and Petrarch, to have been profoundly influenced by the woman of his dreams; like Ovid, to have been banished on the score of love and to have detailed to us the tedious hours of his exile; like Scipio Africanus, urged by its ingratitude, to have quitted his country with a determination never to return; to have wandered from place to place like Dante; like Caesar, to have saved his poem when he was shipwrecked; like Joseph, to have been sold for two hundred crusados; like Ercilla, to have described in verse scenes and actions in which he had borne a share; like Virgil and Thucydides, to have produced his poem under painful conditions; like Cervantes, to have undergone with patience and resignation a severe trial of vicissitudes of life and fortune.

CHAPTER IXX.

THE LUSIADS: THE NATIONAL EPIC OF PORTUGAL.

Cessem do sabio Grego e do Troiano
As navegações grandes que fizeram ;
Cale-se de Alexandre e de Trajano
A fama das victorias que tiveram ;
Que eu canto o peito illustre lusitano
A quem Neptuno e Marte obedeceram :
Cesse tudo o que a Musa antiga canta,
Que outro valor mais alto se alevanta.

*Let Fame with wonder name the Greek no more,
What lands he saw, what toils at sea he bore ;
No more the Trojan's wandering voyage boast,
What storms he brav'd on many a per'lous coast :
No more let Rome exult in Trajan's name,
Nor eastern conquests Ammon's pride proclaim ;
A nobler hero's deeds demand my lays
Than e'er adorned the song of ancient days ;
Illustrious Gama, whom the waves obey'd,
And whose dread sword the fate of empire sway'd.*

Lus. I, 3.

The *Lusiads* is the metamorphosis of the heroic traditions of Portugal into epic verse and Camões is the great wizard, who, by the charm of his genius, rendered such a transformation possible. Were Camões born in another age or in a different country, he might have distinguished himself in any great sphere of human activity, or written an epic to give proof of his intellectual and literary gifts, as Milton did by producing the *Paradise Lost*. Born, however, in Portugal, and at a time when Vasco da Gama, the national Aeneas, was dying, and in an

atmosphere that teemed with the traditions of national heroism, Camões could not but be what he was, namely, the very incarnation of his 'country's soul, and could not possibly have written anything different from what he did, to wit, the *Lusiads*. No poet of any age, ancient or modern, embodied in himself the spirit of his nation so completely as did Camões, so that the least that can be said of him is that he was the Portuguese nation in miniature form. And it is our poet's character, which is a sort of mosaic set with every trait of the national soul, that invests the *Lusiads* with a beauty all its own, and distinguishes it by way of excellence from the national epics that appeared before it.

Long before Camões was inspired by the nymphs of the Tagus, Virgil had flattered Augustus and immortalised himself by bequeathing to humanity his priceless *Æneid*, and centuries before the Mantuan poet communed with the Muses, had Homer—or the multitude of anonymous writers known to us by the name of Homer—translated the heroic traditions of his race into the *Iliad*. But neither the one nor the other of these two great works is illuminated by the light of historical truth, which so profusely illustrates the pages of the *Lusiads*. Transcendental as is the beauty of the classic works of Homer and Virgil, the events and heroes celebrated in them are obscured by clouds of myths and fictions, and the contents of these great epics call forth in our minds only memories of the fossilised remains of a mythical past. We do admire, for instance, Virgil's classic description of Scylla and Charybdis, but we do not for a moment historically subscribe to the adventures of Aeneas in that region. No doubt we find ourselves bewildered by a perusal of the *Iliad*, but we read this great epic only to conclude with a sigh: if all this were but true! The *Lusiads*, however, tells another tale and produces a different impression. It is clear that the superb picture of Adamastor is a creation of the classic imagination of Camões, but the dangers and calamities which the

Portuguese argonauts experienced in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope were actual and real. Moreover, it is obvious that Jupiter and Mars, Bacchus and Venus, are made to play their superhuman parts in the *Lusiads* only to dress this epic with a garb of classic texture, but Vasco da Gama and the discovery of a sea-route to India are at least as historical as Nelson and the battle of Trafalgar. Camões himself emphatically says, with a feeling of just pride, that he does not celebrate fables and myths, but actual facts, *puras verdades*. Let other poets sing the deeds of fabulous gods and mythical heroes, let them invent whatever their imagination can do to heighten the strain of their epic songs :

Cantem, louvem, e escrevam sempre extremos
D'esses seus semideuses, e encareçam,
Fingindo Magas, Circes, Polyphemos,
Sirenas, que co'o canto os adormeçam.

Lus. V, 88.

Let other bards do this and more, but the pure and simple truths which Camões sings are stranger than myths and fictions, the historical heroes whom he celebrates are worthier of epic commemoration than fabulous supermen :

Que por muito, e por muito que se afinem
N'estas fabulas vãs, tão bem sonhadas,
A verdade, que eu canto n'ua e pura,
Vence toda grandiloqua escriptura.

Lus. V, 89.

Two circumstances, therefore, combine to make the *Lusiads* the unique national epic it actually is : the one that it sings the greatest event in the history of Portugal, a purely national enterprise successfully carried out by national heroes, the other that it is the work of the greatest national poet of this country,

who travelled with sword in one hand and pen in the other, as far and wide as did the Portuguese Flag, in order that he might traverse the length and breadth of the vast field of national triumphs, so graphically described in the divine stanzas of the *Lusiads*.

The *Lusiads* is therefore not a child of the imagination of Camões, nor is it merely a work of art produced by our poet to give vent to the poetic fire of his mind. Before it actually took the shape of ten divine cantos the *Lusiads* was lying scattered in the individual minds of the nation. It existed, as truly as it does to-day in an epic form, in the feelings, beliefs, and traditions of the Portuguese race in the same way as the *Iliad* could be read in popular songs and traditions, before it was translated into epic verse. So far as its subject matter is concerned, then, the *Lusiads* is not a work of our poet's own making. It is essentially the work of the nation as a whole translated into epic form by the genius of Camões. The history of the "arms and heroes" celebrated in the *Lusiads* lay scattered in the pure and fresh traditions of the nation, so jealously preserved by the mind of the people. Several particulars about national achievements were to be found in the songs of sailors and in household stories, in the society drawing-rooms as well as in humble cottages. Stories of shipwrecks, accounts of discoveries, tales of national heroism, narratives of tragic deaths in the Atlantic and of voyages around the Cape of Good Hope as far as the shores of Persia and the extreme ends of China—all these constituted the *Lusiads* before it took the crystallised form, in which we find it to-day. No doubt Castanheda had written a book and narrated some of the current stories of national heroism, and João de Barros, the Portuguese Livy, had given a historical account of the national arms in the East. But the subject was too lofty and heroic to be duly appreciated by the historian. The just pride of the nation hungered for something more than a mere

record of events, for something more than mere biographical accounts of national heroes. What was required was the poet's magic wand to transform the national traditions into a sublime epic, which might be at once a history and a symbol, and sing for ever the triumphs, glories, and praises of the Lusitanian race—this great race, which, by its heroic actions, has written across the pages of history the eternal truth that the greatness of a nation does not depend on the extent of its territories, nor on its wealth or population, but on every single effort which it selflessly makes to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind, as did Portugal *par excellence*. The birth of Camões was therefore not an isolated or indifferent incident in the history of Portugal, but an event closely linked to the destinies of the nation. For Camões was born with a mandate from the national deities of Portugal : to interweave the heroic traditions into a fabric of silken texture and to exhibit it to the world at large for universal admiration. But before he embarked on the fulfilment of his great mission, Camões invoked the aid of the nymphs of the Tagus and appealed to them for inspiration. The subject was too lofty and heroic to be sung in humble strain. Camões therefore entreats his native nymphs to teach him the language of the gods, to kindle in his heart a flame of poetic fire and to attune his lyre to the divine strain of epic song, so that he may celebrate in a worthy manner the heroic and martial glories of his race :

E vós, Tagides minhas, pois creado
 Tendes em mim um novo engenho ardente ;
 Se sempre em verso humilde celebrado
 Foi de mi vosso rio alegremente ;
 Dae-me agora um som alto e sublimado,
 Um estylo grandiloquo e corrente ;
 Porque de vossas aguas Phebo ordene
 Que não tenham inveja ás de Hippocrene.

Dae-me uma furia grande e sonora,
 E não de agreste avena ou frauta ruda ;
 Mas de tuba canóra e bellicosa,
 Que o peito accende, e a côr ao gesto muda :
 Dae-me igual canto aos feitos da famosa
 Gente vossa, que Marte tanto ajuda ;
 Que se espalhe e se cante no universo ;
 Se tão sublime prego cabe em verso.

Lus. I, 4, 5.

The *Lusiads* sings one of the greatest events in the history of mankind and tells a story as weird and romantic as the narratives of the Arabian Nights, and yet as real and truthful as anything that is recorded in the annals of the world. There can of course be no two opinions on the fact that round the epic personality of Vasco da Gama gravitates not only the history of Portuguese heroism but to a great extent that of the progress and civilisation of man. The modest and fragile bark, which conveyed Vasco da Gama on board, carried also the seeds of the future transformation of humanity, and the passage of the Portuguese Aeneas to India through the perilous waters of the Atlantic is an event, the full measure of which could only be taken by the passion and genius of Camões. This glorious enterprise can be called national only in so far as it was undertaken and successfully carried out by the national heroes of Portugal under the auspices of the national Flag, but looked at from a scientific and historical point of view, the discovery of a sea-route to India assumes the proportions of an achievement of universal character, the benefits of which will be reaped by the world at large so long as the tides of the East and the West continue to mingle with one another. And it is in the same sense and for the same reason that the *Lusiads* can be called a national epic. It sings the national triumphs of the Portuguese race, but it is at the same time an epic belonging to history at

large, analysing and celebrating and event, the influence of which has penetrated into every department of science and civilisation. If the sages of ancient times, who went from place to place in search of knowledge and the hidden secrets of the world, had seen the wonders that Vasco da Gama saw with his own living eyes, what amazing accounts they would have left behind of their strange experiences !

Se os antigos philosophos, que andaram
Tantas terras, por ver segredos d'ellas,
Se maravilhas, que eu passei, passaram,
A tão diversos ventos dando as vellas ;
Que grandes escripturas, que deixaram !
Que influencia de signos, e de estrellas !
Que estranhezas, que grandes qualidades !
E tudo, sem mentir, puras verdades !

Lus. V, 23.

Though the one great subject which it sings is the discovery of a sea-route to India by Vasco da Gama—an event which, in the opinion of impartial critics, better harmonises with Aristotles' definition of epos than do the subjects of the *Æneid* and the *Iliad*—yet the *Lusiads* is for all practical purposes an epic narrative of the heroic period of Portuguese history and a complete study of the great motives and passions that characterised the life of the Portuguese race in the palmy days of its national triumphs. We cannot of course lose sight of the fact that Portugal is not merely a geographical expression, but a name that arrests the mind of the philosopher and the historian as much as does the name of Sparta. There was a time when this little country suddenly took the proportions of a superhuman power and resolutely embarked on such maritime enterprises as might have overawed even giants. The eventful period of Portuguese heroism at sea was inaugurated by Prince Henry, who provided the necessary scientific impulse to a studied search

of the Atlantic and of the western coast of Africa, while the heroism of Portuguese mariners translated into action the mathematical theories of the immortal Navigator. The darkness of the Atlantic yielded to the light that emanated from the royal hermitage at Sagres. An unbroken series of fearless argonauts plunged themselves into unknown seas and oceans as cheerfully as if they were leaping into a swimming-bath. The western coast of Africa, as well as the interior of this continent, was discovered, explored, and colonised by Portuguese adventurers, not to say anything of the countless capes and islands that are still indicated by Portuguese names on the map of the world. The Atlantic was finally subdued and converted into, so to say, a Portuguese lake. Every day that passed added something fresh to the knowledge of man. New seas, new lands, new peoples, new religions, new stars, and new constellations were brought within the scope of science. The Portuguese Flag was carried in triumph to all the newly discovered parts of the globe, and the world at large stood up to pay a tribute of admiration and gratitude to the gallant heroes sent out by Lusitania to discover unknown lands and seas for the everlasting benefit of humanity. The culminating event in the heroic history of Portugal was no doubt the discovery of a sea-road to India by Gama, who broke the spell of Adamastor and carried to the East the message of western civilisation wrapped up in the folds of the national Flag. These were the materials which Camões was called upon to sublimate into an epic, and he did so by making the entire history of his nation gravitate round the epoch-making achievement of Vasco da Gama. Camões sings the national arms and heroes that came from the West to the East to build up an empire among remote and foreign peoples. He sings the deeds of the great kings, who extended the power of the Flag and the Cross to the very heart of Asia and Africa. He sings all the gallant heroes, who by their valorous achievements have won the crown of immortality :

As armas, e os Barões assinalados,
 Que da occidental praia lusitana,
 Por mares nunca de antes navegados,
 Passaram ainda além da Taprobana ;
 E em perigos e guerras esforçados,
 Mais do que promettia a força humana,
 Entre gente remota edificaram
 Novo reino, que tanto sublimaram.

E também as memorias gloriosas
 D'aquelles Reis, que foram dilatando
 A Fé, o imperio ; e as terras viciosas
 De Africa, e de Asia andaram devastando :
 E aquelles, que por obras valerosas
 Se vão da lei da morte libertando ;
 Cantando espalharei por toda a parte,
 Se a tanto me ajudar of engenho e arte.

Lus. I, 1, 2.

Vasco da Gama and Camões are the two great men, who divide between themselves the heroic history of their country, while the discovery of a sea-route to India and the *Lusiads* are the two acts that sum up and interpret the motives and passions of the national life of Portugal. Gama gave a new world to his country and to the world at large, and Camões bequeathed to his own and to universal literature the first epopeia of modern European nations. "A moral link holds closely together by tradition and national history the names of Vasco da Gama and Camões. They are the two elements of our glory. Through them the entire world respects us, and through them we enter into universal communion." These happy words of Latino Coelho are not mere literary formulas, but truly represent the attitude of the nation towards the memory of these two great makers of her civilisation. No two men embodied in themselves the national traditions and at the same time completed one

another so admirably as did Vasco da Gama and Camões. As if by ordination of Destiny, the author of the *Lusiads* was entering into this world, when the hero of this epic was passing away from it, leaving behind the very breath of his life to inspire and to educate the singer of the Portuguese national glories. And to-day the sacred remains of these two heroes of national greatness are lying preserved and consecrated in the Portuguese Pantheon, which tells the same story in stone as the *Lusiads* does in epic numbers. The moral beauty of the *Lusiads*, therefore, apart from its literary and historical aspects, depends as much on the fact that this epic celebrates the patriotism of a great race, as on the several happy circumstances that have combined together to infuse into it so much feeling and sentiment, which the heart alone can perceive but the mind can never analyse.

The sun of Portuguese glory set long ago. Very soon struck the hour of the collapse of the political power of Portugal. The essential cause of the decline and downfall of this brave little nation was that during the golden period of her history she had lived a life of selfless and heroic ideals. The fatal result of this policy was that Portugal soon came to grief, because nations that live on heroism cannot but have martyrdom for their reward. But when the period of heroism was over and the policy of impossibly religious and political ideals fell to pieces, the national soul of the country cried out for the hand of some master artist, who might raise a permanent monument to the fallen giant and inscribe an epitaph on his grave. And so when the *Lusiads* was published in 1572 it produced a stirring among the dry bones, and the nation rose to a man to admire the grandiose monument, which the genius of Camões had erected to the imperishable name and honour of his country. No wonder, then, that the *Lusiads* has since been looked upon as a national symbol by the Portuguese people. Like a believing Christian, who, when faced by death, clasps the Bible and the

Crucifix, so does Portugal, fallen and threatened with destruction as she now is, passionately embrace the *Lusiads* and wrap herself up in its epic pages.

But though the sun of Portuguese glory set long ago, yet many an unmistakable trace of the light that she shed in the past is yet to be seen in the shadows and darkness of the present. Portugal has lost everything except her name and honour. The days are no more, when her brave argonauts were out to discover new lands and seas and to convey to the far eastern parts of the world the seeds and message of western civilisation. Portugal has lost practically all the capes and islands, peninsulas and archipelagos, discovered by her heroic sons at the cost of immense personal and national sacrifices, but the Portuguese names that lie scattered over the map of the world still indicate the magnitude of the work done by this brave little nation, still bear witness to the service done by her to humanity and civilisation. The shadow of the Portuguese Flag no longer stretches from the Persian Gulf to the Chinese seas, but the footprints of the great Albuquerque lie too deep in the sands of the East to be effaced even by time. Ormuz to-day is nothing more than a memory; Diu is but a relic of the past; Goa is only a shadow of her former glory. But the ruins of these historic places still narrate in mute eloquence the fascinating story of the once invincible Portuguese arms. Portugal is to-day reduced to what may be called "a beautiful picture in a beautiful golden frame." There is but one reality, however, in the shadow of which she can lie down and dream of her great and glorious past—this reality is the *Lusiads*. A few centuries hence the empires and civilisations of to-day will be reduced to mere shadows and memories, but the *Lusiads* will live across the ages yet to come and preserve intact, untarnished, and unblemished, the soul and the glories of the Portuguese nation. Yes, Portugal will live for ever, no matter what may become of her physical

and territorial existence, and she will always live in the epic pages of the *Lusiads*, and in the immortal memory of the great Camões, over whom death has had no power, *em quem poder não teve a morte.*

CHAPTER XX.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE LUSIADS ON THE NATIONAL LIFE OF PORTUGAL.

.....vereis um novo exemplo
De amor dos patrios feitos valerosos
Em versos divulgado numerosos

.....
Vereis amor da patria, não móvido
De premio vil, mas alto e quasi eterno :
Que não é premio vil ser conhecido
Por um prego do ninho meu paterno.

.....to the song attend,
*The numerous song, by patriot-passion fir'd,
And by the glories of thy race inspir'd :
To be the herald of my country's fame,
My first ambition and my dearest aim.*

Lus. I, 9-10.

The *Lusiads* saw the light of publication at the time, when the brilliant age of Portuguese heroism had passed away and an age of vice and corruption had set in. The nation that once stood up like a Hercules, and like the Romans of yore vindicated before the whole world her proud claim to be considered the fashioner of peoples of the most heterogenous types, was soon reduced to a state of imbecility, and her power declined as rapidly as it had risen. At home, the upper classes were enervated by luxury, the

lower classes clamoured for bread and water, while the peasantry emigrated in large numbers to Madeira and Brazil. Abroad, the Portuguese had long ceased to be worthy of their traditions and history in that by their vile and corrupt actions they had dishonoured the memory of the epic heroes of the past. Portugal had practically lost her vitality as a result of the superhuman efforts she had made to conquer Asia, to colonise the Atlantic islands and Brazil, and to propagate the doctrine of the Cross, which she carried with her Flag wherever she went. Public service was everywhere sacrificed to self-interest, individual ambition and avarice were the order of the day, and vice and luxury were the only pre-occupations of the miserable successors of Castro and Albuquerque. And while the nation was in the throes of social, political, and economic distress, the reins of government fell into the hands of a self-willed and irresponsible sovereign, who brought about his own ruin and that of his nation. The tragedy of Alcacer-Kibir took place in 1578, Camões died in 1580, and in the same year Portugal breathed the last breath of her independent existence. What wonder, then, that from that time Camões became the symbol of the nation and the *Lusiads* her Bible?

To appreciate as far as possible the influence of the *Lusiads* on Portuguese national life, it is necessary that we take a comprehensive view of the fact that this epic is a depository of the traditions and history, the very embodiment of the hopes and aspirations, triumphs and glories of the Portuguese nation in the heroic hour of her existence. The epic is for all practical purposes the very life and breath of the race, whose annals it celebrates, and whose character it depicts in lucid and life-like colours. Camões was in reality the Portuguese nation in miniature, or else the *Lusiads* could not have revealed us the secrets of this nation in the way it does. By their discoveries and conquests, which extended over a period of hundred years, the

heroes of Portugal had actually delineated the main features of the national epic, which in due course of time Camões transformed into so many stanzas glowing with Virgilian fire. The outburst of enthusiasm, with which every single Portuguese greeted the *Lusiads* on its first appearance, is a clear proof that the nation instinctively recognised in this epic a portrait of her own self, drawn by the hand of a master artist. The publication of the *Lusiads* was not a success merely in the sense in which the *Paradise Lost* or the *Divina Comedia* was. These two great poems could and did appeal only to the cultured few, but the *Lusiads* awakened spontaneous enthusiasm in all classes of Portuguese society, and the nation rose to a man to salute it as a triumphal monument erected by her greatest architect to commemorate for ever her heroic life and achievements.

The cardinal fact, then, which makes the *Lusiads* a force in the life of the Portuguese nation, is that it is a synthesis of the heroic struggle for existence of this nation and an analysis of the forces that rendered such a struggle possible. The more we read and try to enter into the spirit of the *Lusiads*, the more the conviction grows in us that this epic is a complete study of the national psychology of the Portuguese race, and that Camões is the genius that commanded full knowledge of every single phase and phenomenon of the national life of his people. There is no Portuguese to-day but looks upon the *Lusiads* as his *Vade Mecum*, for it is to him the one eternal relic of the historic past, an inspiring symbol of life and hope, the only star that steadily shines on the dark and nebulous firmament of national existence. And why should it not be so? Every single national hero finds his name and place in the epic pages of the *Lusiads*; every historic family plays its part in the national drama; and the whole Portuguese people feel identified with every scene and act of this drama. Camões means more to a Portuguese than Shakespeare to an Englishman, Goethe to a German, or Dante to an Italian, and "his epic is a greater subject of pride to his

countrymen than their conquests in the East." And even to-day, far removed as we are from the palmy days celebrated in the national epic, there is but one bond that holds together the different classes of Portuguese society both at home and abroad, and unites the Motherland to the colonies and to the great sister republic of Brazil—that bond is the *Lusiads*. Across three centuries and a half we can distinctly trace the trail of the influence exercised by the epic of Camões on the national life of Portugal. In her moments of depression and anxiety the nation always sought and found consolation and hope in the inspiring verses of the *Lusiads*. When the national power had already been at its ebb, the few surviving Portuguese heroes fought like lions during the siege of Colombo by singing aloud the patriotic stanzas of the *Lusiads*. Throughout the period of Portuguese captivity under the Spanish yoke, the crippled nation drank deep of the epic and used it as a tonic to prepare herself for a fresh struggle for her independent political existence. And the revolution of 1640 was actually provoked by the influence of the *Lusiads* on the nation in chains, which is clearly borne out by the fact that João Pinto Ribeiro, the hero of the revolution, was day and night seeking inspiration in the *Lusiads*.

The magical influence of the *Lusiads* on the national life of Portugal is therefore a phenomenon that can be explained only by the fact that Camões appealed to the conscience of his people, revealed to them secrets of their collective life, and elicited from them spontaneous love, sympathy, and admiration for his work. Let us listen to what the most eminent critic and biographer of Camões has to say on this matter. "The genius of a writer," writes Theofilo Braga, "is not completely revealed by his work, nor can his work be appreciated only by the beauty it gives expression to, but it is by the social sympathy, which it awakens, that the intuition and aesthetic capacity of the artist are brought into clear relief; and every

work of art, by giving rise to social sympathy, achieves the end of aesthetic creations. The work of Camões from age to age acquires more and more value, because the social sympathy which the author awakened with it has not yet been extinguished, although the form of language, the mythological style of the renaissance, the social organisation he celebrated, have now become out of date, and although the national feeling that was carrying us to geographical discoveries and colonial expansion has been completely obliterated. The social sympathy with the work of Camões began to operate much earlier than the attention devoted to it by savants, and at no time was it extinguished, even in the most acute crisis of national life. And when this life revived in the transformation of the political institutions, the social sympathy for the work of Camões increased in intensity and reached a point where it became identical with national life."

Three hundred years after the death of Camões, Portugal awoke to live one of the greatest moments in her life, when the tide of popular enthusiasm led on to a state of national delirium. The commemoration of the third centenary of Camões in 1880 called forth all that was good and noble and true in the heart of the country, which had so long remained criminally indifferent to the memory of her immortal Bard. The centenary offered a golden opportunity to give a national consecration to the joint memory of the two greatest and inseparable names in Portuguese history. On the 8th of June, 1880, the ashes of Camões and Vasco da Gama were carried in an endless national procession to be enshrined in the Church of Belem, whose massive walls and gothic architecture tell the same story in mute eloquence as does the *Lusiads* in epic strain. On this eventful day the present, past, and future generations of Portugal seemed to unite to pay their respectful homage of love and gratitude to the two great makers of her history and civilisation. The two

urns, which contained the precious remains of the Poet and the Hero, were deposited respectively on the right and the left side of the tomb of Dom Sebastião in the national Pantheon, Queen Maria Pia placing a silver wreath on the sacred ashes of Camões and King Luiz I a similar wreath on the remains of Vasco da Gama—wreaths which were sprinkled with tears of love and gratitude of the whole nation. The 10th of June was a day for national jubilation: it was also a day for national penance. For on this day, three hundred years before, the country had suffered Camões to die a miserable death in a charity hospital, burying him like a beggar in a most obscure grave. The centenary called forth memories of national ingratitude, and the country felt the pangs of shame and remorse, which she tried to overcome by prostrating herself at the shrine of her immortal Bard to make what little atonement she could for the multitude of sins she had committed against his name and memory. This dual manifestation of national joy and national penance at one and at the same time culminated in the most solemn apotheosis of Camões and gave a visible demonstration of the immense influence which the *Lusiads* has from generation to generation exerted on the life of the country. The death of Camões had shown that the Poet was worthy of his Nation: the centenary proved that the Nation was worthy of her Poet.

CHAPTER XXI.
THE INFLUENCE OF THE LUSIADS ON
PORTUGUESE LITERATURE.

Floreça, fale, cante, ouça-se e viva
A Portugueza lingua, e já onde for
Sonhora vá de si soberba, e altiva.
Se téqui esteve baixa, e sem louvor,
Culpa he dos que a mal exercitaraõ.

(Antonio Ferreira.)

May the Portuguese language flourish, may its beauties be every where heard and sung; and may she be ever self-sufficient and conscious and proud of her dignity! If so long the language was poor and unknown, the fault is of those who used it badly.

Before and even during the days of Camões, it was the prevailing practice in Portugal to write poetry either in Spanish or Latin, Portuguese being then in too rude a state to be used as a medium of poetic expression. We shall see in the course of this chapter how our poet breathed a new life into his national language and brought to light all the graces and beauties that were so long lying underneath its rough surface. But we must not lose sight of the fact that a few other poets, who were either the precursors or contemporaries of Camões, had actually laid the foundations of Portuguese literature; and as their writings did to some extent influence the literary work of our poet, at least so far as his lyrical and dramatic compositions are concerned, no apology is necessary to take a cursory view of their contributions to the refining of their native language.

GIL VICENTE (1470—1536) was a man of exceptional literary abilities and the founder of dramatic poetry in Portugal. He studied law at the University of Lisbon and devoted himself

heart and soul to intellectual pursuits. The brilliancy of his culture and accomplishments soon secured him a high place in the court, where his plays were frequently acted at the evening entertainments known as the *serões do paço*. He invested his writings with a moral element by means of which "he severely censured vice and induced a predilection for virtue." Gil Vicente soon became the celebrity of his age, and his fame, to quote the words of an English writer, was not confined to Portugal and Spain only, but spread rapidly throughout civilised Europe; while Erasmus is reported to have studied Portuguese for the purpose of being able to read his works in the original and to have expressed himself highly gratified by their perusal. We may also listen to the authority of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which says that "he was a great dramatist in embryo, who, if he had been born fifty years later and preserved his liberty of thought and expression, might with added culture have surpassed Calderon and taken his place as the Latin and Catholic rival of Shakespeare." Gil Vicente wrote extensively and well, and though many of his writings are in Spanish, "they are all eminently national in idea, texture, and subject." The service he did to his national language was of a lasting character and the influence he exercised on the writers of his age was considerable. Gil Vicente was the master of Camões in the art of dramatic poetry.

Bernardim Ribeiro (1482—1552) was the first true Portuguese poet in the same way as Gil Vicente was the first true Portuguese dramatist. He founded "the most national school of Portuguese poetry, that of the romantic pastoral type." Ribeiro was a serene idealist and child of dreams, a man who perpetually lived in the midst of ethereal visions, and this gentle cast of his nature is clearly reflected in his writings. He was tragically unhappy as a lover and in his *Menina e Moça* he tells the story of his unfortunate passion. Ribeiro embellished

the national language with his beautiful verses, "which for their sincerity of feeling, simple diction, and chaste form, are unsurpassed in Portuguese literature."

Francisco de Sá de Miranda (1490—1558) was born in Coimbra, and from his early youth, as he wandered along the banks of the classic Mondego, he entertained a passion for poetry. He completed his academic career with distinction at the University of Lisbon, and gained easy access to the court, where, among other things, he witnessed the triumphs of King Manoel the Fortunate. He made poetry and philosophy the chief studies of his life, and in 1520, with the object of extending his knowledge by having access to important seats of culture and learning, set out for Italy, and visited Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples and Sicily. During his stay in the classic land of Italy, he won the friendship of many distinguished poets and men of letters of that country, and returned to Portugal in 1525 resolved to found the Italian school of poetry in his country, which he succeeded in doing. Some unfortunate incident compelled him to retire to his country residence called *Quinta da Tapada*, where he was left broken-hearted by the death of his devoted wife in 1555, and he survived her only three years, during which "he never quitted his house, except to hear mass at a neighbouring convent, never shaved his beard, never pared his nails, never answered the letters of his friends." Sá de Miranda actually brought about a revolution in Portuguese literature, especially in poetry, which under his influence became "higher in aim, purer in tone, and broader in sympathy." No doubt he wrote some of his works in Latin and Spanish, which to some extent deprived his own language of his valuable help. His works include some sonnets, elegies, *redondilhas* and two comedies.

Antonio Ferreira (1528—1569) was born in Lisbon and early showed signs of the poetic cast of his mind. He studied at the University of Coimbra and had for his tutor the eminent

professor of philosophy, Diogo de Teive. Ferreira was a passionate admirer of the classic ages, and the poets of antiquity, whom he studied day and night, exercised 'permanent influence on his mind. He served his king and country in different capacities, which prevented him from devoting himself exclusively to poetry. His character has been admirably summed up by a writer, who says that "he was humane as a judge, yet unbiassed in the distribution of justice, and the friends of his youth were friends of his whole life." He was four years younger than Camões, but died three years before the publication of the *Lusiads*, a victim to plague which raged in Lisbon in 1569, when he was only forty-one years old. Ferreira walked in the footsteps of Sá de Miranda and contributed not a little to the improvement of the national language. Unlike Miranda, he wrote exclusively in Portuguese, and Diogo Bernardes has said of him that he presented to his country "many excellent verses, but not one in a foreign language." Sá de Miranda had introduced, to quote one writer, "the sonnet on the Italian model, the elegy and Horatian epistle; and to these were added the epigram, ode, and epithalamium by Ferreira." Ferreira had the well-being of his country next to his heart, and in a preface to one of his works he says: "I am content with this glory that I have loved my land and my people."

These were the writers who, together with the great historian João de Barros and a few other prose authors, laid the foundations of Portuguese literature and enriched it as far as they could with their works. But it is enough to read these authors and to pass on from them to Camões to realise how much he improved, refined, and stabilised the language, and how far in poetry he excelled all his predecessors and successors up to the present day. We have already seen that it was a practice among the men of letters of the age of Camões to write important works either in Spanish or Latin, but our poet was too great

a patriot to translate the inspired message of his national deities into a language that was not his own, and the subject of his poem was too national to be celebrated in foreign phrase and idiom. It is agreed that the poet found his language as inadequate to meet the requirements of a great epic as Dante found the Italian for the use of his *Divina Comedia*. But like the inspired Bard of Florence, Camões overcame the several difficulties he was confronted with, eliminated such elements as tended to corrupt his language, invented new forms of literary and metrical art, and transformed what was only a language without a fixed and permanent character of its own into a purely national language in the finest sense of the word. Who can actually gauge the contribution made by Camões to his national idiom, which he rendered elastic enough to translate into a language the most intricate thoughts of the mind, and capable of satisfying the most exacting needs of cultivated prose and poetry, enriching it with an infinite number of formulas borrowed from the classic languages or invented by himself?

Three centuries and a half intervene between the publication of the *Lusiads* and the present day, but Camões still remains the undisputed sovereign of Portuguese literature, and his epic continues to be the hinge on which revolves the whole structure of national literature. To the cultured world outside Portugal, this country is known as the *Patria of Camões*, and her language as the *language of Camões*, which is more than a proof that Camões is the one man, through whom the world at large is familiar with Portuguese national life and literature. The greatest service, however, which the *Lusiads* did to Portuguese literature, was during the period of Spanish occupation of this country, when her language seemed to be on the point of extinction, especially because most of the Portuguese men of letters were writing in Spanish to flatter the ruling authorities. During these dark years the *Lusiads* alone kept the flame of patriotism burning in the heart of the nation and rendered impossible such

a tragedy as that of the Portuguese language succumbing to the Spanish

It is clear, then, that the *Lusiads* not only moulded the Portuguese language, but also saved it from corruption and rendered its extinction impossible during the most acute crisis in the life of the nation. The place of the *Lusiads* in universal literature has been correctly determined by the great German writer Frederick Schlegel, who says that Camões is worth an entire literature by himself. This hearty appreciation, coming as it does from an eminent and impartial critic, brings into relief the tremendous difference which the *Lusiads* makes to the Portuguese language and literature. And to what has been already said in the preceding lines we may link the weighty authority of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which writes: "The *Lusiads* is the most successful modern epic cast in the ancient mould, and it has done much to preserve the corporate life of the Portuguese people and to keep alive the spirit of nationality in times of adversity like the "Spanish Captivity" and the Napoleonic invasion. Even now it forms a powerful bond between the mother country and her potentially mighty daughter nation across the Atlantic, the United States of Brazil. The fact that the *Lusiads* is written in a little known language, and its intensely national and almost exclusively historical character, undoubtedly militates against a right estimate of its value, now that Portugal, once a world power, has long ceased to hold the East in fee or to guide the destinies of Europe. But though political changes may and do react on literary appreciation, the *Lusiads* remains none the less a great poem, breathing the purest religious fervour, love of country and spirit of chivalry, with splendid imaginative and descriptive passages full of the truest and deepest poetry. The structure is Virgilian, but the whole conception is the author's own, while the style is natural and noble, the diction nearly always correct and elegant, and the verse, as a rule, sonorous and full of harmony."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE LUSIADS AND THE RENAISSANCE.

Ouvi, que não vereis com vãs façanhas,
Phantasticas, fingidas, mentirosas,
Louvar os vossos, como nas estranhas
Musas, de engrandecer-se desejosas :
As verdadeiras vossas são tamanhas,
Que excedem as sonhadas, fabulosas ;
Que excedem Rhodamonte, e o vao Rugeiro,
E Orlando, inda que fora verdadeiro.

*Nor conquests fabulous, nor actions vain,
The muse's pastime, here adorn the strain :
Orlando's fury and Rugero's rage,
And all the heroes of the Aonian page,
The dreams of bards surpass'd the world shall view,
And own their boldest fictions may be true ;
Surpass'd, and dimm'd by the superior blaze
Of Gama's mighty deeds, which here bright Truth displays.*

Lus. I, 11.

The Renaissance—to use the term in its broadest sense—embraces the whole process of transition in Europe from the mediaeval to the modern order. The Middle-Ages cover the prolonged period of ten centuries' spiritual fast in the life of man, during which his conceptions of Love and Beauty, and his general outlook on life, depended on what little inspiration he could derive from the cold and stereotyped formulas, dictated by the ultra-religious and ascetic spirit of the times. The Renaissance awakened man to the dawn of a new life and revealed to him the eternal truth that God speaks to His

creatures as much through the song of a lark and the petals of a rose as He does through the sermons of a priest. To love this life was no longer a sin ; to share the joys and beauties of this world was no longer a crime. The new age brought into full play the finer and purer instincts of human nature, and in the hour of universal enthusiasm man happily realised that the paradise is not entirely lost to him, but still survives in the blue skies and the silvery lakes, in the laughing lilies and sunny landscapes ; and that Nature is the perennial cathedral, where all mankind can day and night enter into communion with God. The gospel of the new age was preached with robust optimism, and every sphere of human activity came under the sway of the new creed. The church yielded to its influence in due course of time, and Pope Nicholas V. and Leo X. actually became the heroes of the Renaissance. Among other things, ancient literature was now welcomed with passionate enthusiasm, not only as supplying standards of form, but as disclosing a new conception of life, " a conception freer, larger, more rational, and more joyous than the mediaeval ; one which gave unfettered scope to the play of human feelings, to the sense of beauty, and to all the activities of the intellect." The world was pagan again, the Christian writers going to seek inspiration in the works of the ancient masters. The re-discovery of the classic past was in full harmony with the spirit of the Renaissance, and "revealed the continuity of history and the identity of human nature in spite of diverse creeds and different customs ; held up for imitation masterpieces of literature, philosophy, and art ; provoked enquiry ; encouraged criticism ; and shattered the narrow mental barriers imposed by mediaeval orthodoxy." The excessive enthusiasm of the Renaissance, however, produced one vicious result : it led in many cases to slavish imitation, which in the phrase of Emerson we might call suicide. The minor writers and poetasters of the new age, in their vain attempt to imitate the works of ancient masters with the aid of a mere

mechanism of rules and forms, hopelessly failed to reproduce the graces and beauties of the classic literature ; and it is to these mediocrities that we must apply the words of Voltaire, who says that everything was borrowed from the ancient masters except their genius. But the real men of genius of the Renaissance were for all practical purposes incarnations of the great savants of the classic ages, and it is they that bridged the gulf separating the present from the past. In this brilliant circle of the chosen few looms large the name of Camões, the epic of Portugal and the apostle of the Renaissance.

The one great passion of the new age was to extend the limits of human knowledge as far as possible and to explore the known and unknown worlds to the best advantage of mankind. And of course there can be no two opinions on the fact that the eventful epoch of discoveries holds a very remarkable place in the history of the Renaissance inasmuch as it marks a period, in which new worlds were added to the knowledge of man, and his mental and moral outlook so far extended as to convert him from an ascetic into an enthusiast of this life. We have seen at length how Portugal was carried away by the enthusiasm of the new age and by an overpowering passion for a life of heroism and adventure, and how she set her heart on discovering and reclaiming for man the unknown parts of the globe. The heroic mariners, that joyously leapt into the peril-ridden waters of the Atlantic with frail and tiny barks, represent the very best energies let loose by the dawn of the Renaissance. In the field of science and discovery, then, Portugal had done enough to deserve well of the new man that was everywhere making an effort to create for himself a fresh atmosphere to breathe and live in. The literature of this country, however, took some time to respond to the passionate call of the Renaissance, partly because the nation was for a long time busy with affairs of internal organisation, partly because her best energies were almost

exclusively devoted to a life of conquest and discovery. But the genius of Portugal responded at last to the call of the Renaissance through the medium of Camões, who built up a superb work of literary art, so full and overflowing with the spirit of his own age. Camões did for universal literature what a few years before him Gama had done for universal science, and his work redounds as much to the credit of his own nation as to the glory of the Renaissance. With the skill of a perfect artist he borrowed whatever colours he needed from the classic ages and produced a representative picture of his own times. "Camões was the first modern poet," writes the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "to compose an epic on a purely modern theme, vying with Virgil but not bending to pedantic rules, and breathing the spirit of the age of the heroic adventures and almost fabulous discoveries into his melodious numbers."

We now come to a point, which has given rise to a curious paradox in the *Lusiads*. The subject of this epic is essentially Christian, but its machinery is designedly heathen. Both Camões and his hero worship and believe in Christ, but the gods that are made to operate actively in the action of the epic are Jupiter and Venus, Bacchus and other mythological deities. This seemingly self contradictory aspect of the *Lusiads* has elicited some very strange comments from the critics of Camões, critics who find fault with the poet, because he refused to circumscribe the powers of his classic imagination by conventional rules and technicalities. Camões was of course conscious that it would be a trifle incongruous to introduce heathen machinery into his great epic, designed to celebrate the national heroes, whose actions are inseparably bound up with the work of Christianity in the East. But the poet certainly did not employ the supernatural machinery of the classic ages either because it had any religious fascination for his mind, or because his own belief in Christianity was in any way shadowy or doubtful, but because it was the only means by which, given the

spirit of his age and the character of his own education, he could most effectively give expression to the epic ideas of his mind. The poet himself tells us in the ninth canto of the *Lusiads* that his machinery is allegorical. The historical parts of the epic leave no doubt in our minds that the heroes are Christian and their object is professedly to establish a Christian empire in the East. The machinery of the *Lusiads* is therefore a mere accident, rendered necessary by the exigencies of classic poetry. Let us listen to the impartial authority of Julius Mickle on this point. "His (of Camões) heroes are Christians," writes this eminent English commentator of the *Lusiads* "and *Santa Fé*, Holy Faith, is often mentioned in the historical parts where his heroes speak and act. But it is only in the allegorical parts that the pagan or the poetical machinery is introduced. And in his machinery, as in his historical parts, there is no mixture of pagan and Christian personages."

Let us still further enquire into the reasons, which impelled Camões to make an appeal to the spirit of the classic ages. It is clear that some sort of poetical mechanism was necessary to heighten and sustain the action of the epic, but the choice of this mechanism could not possibly be a matter of indifference to the poet, in so far as it was to decide, to some extent at least, the literary character of his work. The supernatural powers of Christian theology are too august and sacred to capture the imagination of a poet, and Camões, who was himself a believer, could not possibly take the same liberties with the holy figures of his religion as he has done with mythological deities. Had it pleased the poet to employ the Christian machinery in his epic, a thousand and one limitations would have precluded him from dealing, say for instance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, as freely and poetically as he has done with Venus, who is decidedly the most charming and fascinating character in the *Lusiads*. Camões could have also made use of the mediaeval machinery, consisting of good and evil spirits,

wizards and witches, giants and demons, or he could have invented, like Milton, an allegorical machinery of his own, with personifications of virtue and vice to serve as mystical representations of divinity. But the one was too antiquated and absurdly fantastic to appeal to the classic mind of Camões, and the other was too cold and lifeless to help him to infuse into his great epic both the enthusiasm of his age and the passion of his soul. It is clear, then, that the poetical machinery of the ancient ages was the only recourse left to Camões to translate the epic ideas of his mind most effectively into his great poem, which, according to the 'weighty authority of Montesquieu, "combines the charms of the *Odyssey* with the magnificence of the *Æneid*."

Apart from the classic graces and beauties which have given a sublimated form to the work of Camões, the *Lusiads* is pre-eminently an epic of the Renaissance for several other reasons. Written at a time when man was making a most determined effort to set himself free from the limitations imposed on him by mediaeval orthodoxy, the epic of Camões must be looked upon as a hymn of glory, sung in praise of the great nation, which accomplished the Herculean work of pulling down the barriers that stood in the way of free intercourse between man and man, and by sheer force of this right presided, for a time at least, at the civilisation of Europe. Guided by his own genius and enlightened by the enthusiasm of his own age, Camões collected, so to say, all the crystals and curiosities of the Renaissance and exhibited them in his great museum of art: the *Lusiads*. Hence it is that, examined in the light of scientific criticism, we can see the full proportions of this great epic, which not only celebrates the glories of a race, but also delineates the characteristic features of its age and defines the attitude of Europe towards civilisation in general. The passionate appeal, which Camões makes to the evidence of facts, history, and national traditions, singularly marks him out to be a representative poet of the Renaissance, and

brings into clear relief the unruffled optimism of his life and his buoyant faith in the progress and happiness of man. Despite all the calamities and adversities of his existence, our poet lived in a state of serene optimism, partly because he was influenced by the universal enthusiasm of his age, partly because his faith in the destinies of mankind was sustained by the monumental contribution made by his country to the civilisation of the world. "The maritime discoveries were unquestionably the culminating fact of the history of civilisation during the Renaissance," writes Oliveira Martins. "The poet (Camões) who sings these discoveries, and the nation that took a predominant part in the accomplishment of this work, rank among the rarest prophets of humanity. The epic celebrates an actual state of the collective soul and an act of the contemporaneous society: this state is in the *Lusiads* one of idealistic optimism as defined by the national character of the Portuguese; this act are the geographical discoveries of the Lusitanian people."

The passion of the Renaissance was the passion of the Portuguese race in the hour of its heroic triumphs, and it could not but be the passion of Camões, who identified himself not only with the soul of his nation but with the spirit of his age. The enthusiasm created by the revival of learning permeates the entire *Lusiads* and runs through every single literary episode of the great epic. The assembly of the Olympic gods in the first canto is described with all the grace and art of Virgil, and the general management of the mythological machinery throughout the *Lusiads* rivals with the classical structure of the *Æneid*. The portrait of Venus in the second canto, sensuous as it is, is one of the most artistic creations of the genius of the Renaissance, and probably the finest example of the beautiful in the *Lusiads*. In the third canto the episode of Dona Ignez de Castro, the ideal woman of the *Lusiads*, is a precious gem of art and beauty and a masterpiece of pathetic composition. We can scarcely point out a grander figure in the history of women than that of this

Portuguese heroine, who in martyrdom found the consummation of all that was good and noble and virtuous in her heart; while in the literature of the world there is perhaps nothing more pathetic than the sweet and thrilling verses which tell her tragic story in the *Lusiads*. The description of the battle of Aljubarrota brings into relief the power of Camões to invest a purely historical fact with all the grace and charm of poetic art. The circumstances preparatory to the engagement are happily imagined and solemnly conducted, and "the fury of the combat is supported with a poetical heat and a variety of imagery, which, one need not hesitate to affirm, would have done honour to an ancient classic." The episode of Adamastor in the fifth canto is out and out the supreme creation of the genius of Camões, a creation which "in sublimity and awful grandeur of imagination, stands unsurpassed in human composition." The gigantic Cape, which for a long time remained the greatest obstacle in the way of the Portuguese to the East, could not be better represented than as a personification of Adamastor. The entire episode is the offspring of the imagination of Camões, and gives a display of the serene majesty of Virgil. In the sixth canto the description of the mighty tempest, raised by the gods of the sea at the instigation of Bacchus, is both vivid and masterly, and combines the conduct of the *Æneid* with the descriptive exuberance of the *Odyssey*; while "the appearance of the star of Venus through the storm is finely imagined, the influence of the nymphs of the goddess over the winds, and their subsequent nuptials are in the spirit of the promise of Juno to Eulus." In the Seventh Canto the sketch of the palace of the Zamorim, situated among aromatic groves, is true to history, but "the embellishment of the walls is in imitation of Virgil's description of the palace of King Latinus" The Island of Love in the ninth Canto over flows with the enthusiasm let loose by the unfettered spirit of the Renaissance. This happy fiction of Camões, designed by him to put a splendid

finale to the glorious enterprise of Vasco da Gama and his gallant band, and wherein he gives a warm but chaste description of nude nymphs, all anxious to be loved and courted by the fatigued Portuguese heroes, this fiction has been described as a piece of obscene literature by some foreign critics, among these being Voltaire, whose appreciation of the *Lusiads* was vitiated by what they read in defective translations, which hopelessly failed to reproduce the literary beauties of the great epic. That such a criticism is unwarranted and gratuitous can be seen from the high authority of the eminent English translator and commentator of the *Lusiads*, William Mickle. "No painter," says he, "was ever blamed for drawing the graces unveiled or naked. In sculpture, in painting, and poetry, it is not nakedness, it is the expression or manner only that offends decency. It is this which constitutes the difference between a Venus de Medicis and the lascivious paintings in the apartments of a Tiberius. The fate of Camões has been very peculiar. The mixture of pagan and Christian machinery has been anathematised, and his Island of Love represented as a brothel. Yet both the accusations are the arrogant assertions of the most superficial acquaintance with his works, a *Hearsay*, echoed from critic to critic. His poem itself, and a comparison of its parts with the similar conduct of the greatest modern poets, will clearly evince that in both instances no modern epic writer of note has given less offence to true criticism." The prophetic song of the Nymph in the palace of Thetis is a happy artifice to invest some of the glorious episodes of national history with the enthusiasm and glow of poetry. As to the general conduct and character of the *Lusiads* we may well listen to the authority of an English critic. "An unexhausted fertility and variety of poetical description, an unexhausted elevation of sentiment and a constant tenor of the grand simplicity of diction, complete the character of the *Lusiads* of Camões: a poem which, though it has hitherto received from the public most unmerited neglect, and from the

critics most flagrant injustice, was yet better understood by the greatest poet of Italy. Tasso never did his judgment more credit, than when he confessed that he dreaded Camões as a rival; or his generosity more honour than when he addressed an elegant sonnet to the hero of the *Lusiads*." What else is needed to show that the *Lusiads* is a hymn of glory, sung in praise of a great race and an eventful age?

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CONDUCT AND MACHINERY OF THE LUSIADS.

The *Lusiads* opens with two magnificent stanzas, wherein the subject of the epic is proposed, after which comes the classic invocation to the nymphs of the Tagus, immediately followed by the dedication of the great poem to the ill-fated King Sabastian, the *maravilha fatal da nossa edade*. The *Lusiads* proper opens with a view of the Portuguese fleet sailing under favourable winds between the coast of Ethiopia and the island of São Lourenço. The allegorical machinery of the epic now begins to operate, the gods of the classic ages meeting in a council to pronounce favourably or otherwise upon the daring enterprise of the Portuguese. The opinion of Jupiter is favourable, and so is that of Venus and Mars. Bacchus, however, who is furiously jealous of the Portuguese lest these should deprive him of his empire in the East, passionately opposes their claims but in vain. The fleet now sails onwards with the blessing of the gods and arrives in the waters of Moçambique, where it providentially escapes falling into the death-trap of Bacchus. After this adventure the ships proceed to Quiloa and thence to Mombasa, and in both these places the arch-enemy of the Portuguese makes fruitless attempts to lure them into his snares. At Mombasa the fleet is on the point of being treacherously destroyed, when Venus and her nymphs hasten in time to its aid. Moved by extreme solicitude for the Portuguese, Venus intercedes with Jupiter on their behalf, whereupon the supreme god

commissions Mercury to warn Gama in a dream of the impending danger and to advise him to seek shelter in the hospitable waters of Melinda. The great Captain acts up to the instructions of the celestial messenger and immediately makes for Melinda, where he is received with an unusual demonstration of sympathy and good-will. The king of the city comes in person to pay a visit to his guests, and during a conversation with Vasco da Gama calls upon the latter to give a description of his native land. The narrative that follows includes a concise but vivid description of Europe and a glowing account of the heroic achievements of national heroes from the foundation of the Portuguese monarchy to the palmy days of Dom Manoel. Vasco da Gama relates to his royal host the exploits of Count Henry, who prepared the way for the foundation of Portuguese monarchy; the inspiring episode of the unexampled fidelity of Egas Moniz; the battle of Ourique, the auspicious apparition of Christ, the rout of the Moors, and the establishment of the Portuguese kingdom by Dom Affonso Henriques; a vivid account of the reigns of Dom Sancho I, Dom Affonso II, Dom Sancho II, Dom Affonso III, Dom Diniz, and Dom Affonso IV; the tragic episode of Dom Pedro and Dona Ignez de Castro; the ruinous character of the reign of Dom Fernando, the puppet of the voluptuous and unscrupulous Dona Leonor Telles; Aljubarrotta, the great struggle for national freedom, the heroic exploits of Dom João I and Nuno Alvares Pereira, and the most crushing defeat of the Spanish forces; the achievements and victories of Dom Affonso V; the efforts made by Dom João II to discover a route to India by land; the vision of Dom Manoel, who in a dream sees the immense empire which the Portuguese were destined to establish in the East; the preparations for the departure of Vasco da Gama; the solemnity of the night spent in devotion; the sullen resolution of the adventurers when going aboard the fleet; the demonstrations of sympathy and grief of their friends and fellow citizens, who looked upon them as self-

sacrificing victims ; the departure of the historic fleet from the shores of Belem ; the adventures of Fernão Velloso ; the apparition of Adamastor, and the remaining part of the voyage of the Portuguese fleet as far as the shores of Melinda. After heartily sharing the generous hospitality of the king of Melinda, Vasco da Gama continues his voyage across the Indian Ocean. Everything seems to be quiet and peaceful, when Bacchus descends to the palace of Neptune in the depths of the sea and implores the watery gods to bring about the destruction of the Portuguese fleet. The gods agree, and while Fernão Velloso is amusing his friends by narrating a story of national heroism, a great tempest suddenly arises and the Portuguese find themselves face to face with danger and death. The moment is one of despair, but Venus and her nymphs hasten to the aid of the fleet and save it from the treacherous machinations of Bacchus. Vasco da Gama finally arrives at Calicut, where he is well received by the Zamorim to whom he presents himself as the ambassador of his king. While the Zamorim is consulting soothsayers about the visit of the strangers, the chief of the place (Catual) comes to visit the Portuguese fleet and shows himself struck with admiration at the sight of the paintings on the banners, whereupon Paulo da Gama, the brother of the Hero, entertains the visitor at an historical explanation of the paintings in question, and incidentally gives him a vivid account of the heroic episodes connected with the lives of Egas Moniz, Dom Fuas Roupinho, Dom Prior Theotónio, Mem Moniz, Giraldo Sem Pavor, Martim Lopes, Paio Peres Correa, Gonçalo Ribeiro and others. Bacchus makes a fresh attempt to gain his evil end, and this time he appears to the Zamorim in a dream and makes him believe that the Portuguese are pirates. The Zamorim contemplates the destruction of the fleet, but this time Venus not only saves her favourite heroes but leads them to the Island of Love, where unspeakable pleasure and delight are awaiting them to crown their heroic labours. The Portuguese disembark on this floating Eden and

catch sight of the many nude but bashful nymphs hiding in the groves of trees, all waiting to be loved and courted by them. What beauteous and lovely scenes! What an abode of joy and delight! Thetis then leads Vasco da Gama and his heroes to her palace, where a nymph prophetically sings the future triumphs of the Portuguese in the East: the exploits of the invincible Duarte Pacheco, Dom Francisco de Almeida, Dom Lourenço de Almeida, Affonso de Albuquerque, Soares de Albuquerque, Sequeira, Menezes, Dom João de Castro and others. In the end the Goddess gives Gama a view of the Eastern World, from the Cape of Good Hope to the farthest islands of Japan. She poetically describes every region and the principal islands and concludes: *all these shall be given to the Western World by you.* After heartily enjoying the blissful hospitality of Venus, the heroes return to Portugal.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TRIBUTE FROM ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS.

Quão doce é o louvor e a justa gloria
 Dos proprios feitos, quando são soados!
 Qualquer nobre trabalho, que em memoria
 Vença, ou iguale os grandes já passados.
 As invejas da illustre e alheia historia
 Fazem mil vezes feitos sublimados.
 Quem valerosas obras exercita,
 Louvor alheio muito o esperta, e incita.

*What boundless joys are thine, O just renown,
 Thou hope of virtue and her noblest crown;
 By thee the seeds of conscious worth are fired,
 Hero by hero, fame by fame inspired:
 Without thine aid how soon the hero dies!
 By thee up borne his name ascends the skies.*

The works of Camões have been translated and re-translated into every civilised language of Europe. Several detached episodes from the *Lusiads* have been separately rendered into different languages by men of letters of undisputed eminence.

And commentaries without number have been written on the works of our poet by many a literary savant of Europe. But as the number of those, who have appreciated, explained, and interpreted the works of Camões is legion, an attempt is made to say in a few fugitive lines what English writers alone have done to popularise the name of our poet in England and elsewhere.

Sir Richard Fanshaw was the first to translate the *Lusiads* into English. The translation, however, to a great extent impairs the beauty of the original, and fails to give the reader an idea of the merits and excellences of the *Lusiads*. Voltaire and Rapin read Camões through the medium of this translation, and to this fact must be attributed their gratuitous and untenable criticism of the *Lusiads*.

William Julius Mickle, himself a poet of no mean repute, was the next to undertake the translation of the *Lusiads*. Being dissatisfied with the work of Sir Richard Fanshaw, Mickle retired to a quiet country house in the vicinity of Oxford in 1772, where he worked with Benedictine patience for three long years, and published his translation in 1775. The historical notes which are given in this work were mainly contributed by the great Oxford scholar, Dr. Rowe. Mickle's translation has been used in the present work.

J. Talbot, Baron of Dillon, out of his boundless admiration for the *Lusiads*, struck a medal in honour of Camões in 1782. An engraving of this medal appeared in the April number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* of the year 1784 together with these words : "It was lately caused to be struck by the Baron de Dillon, a gentleman who has obliged the world with his travels in Spain and other ingenious works. The medal is taken from a picture in the possession of the Marquis of Nysa, the ninth descendant of Vasco de Gama, the discoverer of India and Hero of the *Lusiads*."

Lord Strangford has written *Poems from the Portuguese of Camões*, including a biographical note and translation of some sonnets. This work has met with a very cold and rather an unfavourable reception at the hands of critics.

Johnson, the eminent English philosopher and poet, speaks of the translation of the *Lusiads* by Mickle in his *English Poets*. He was a great admirer of Camões and at one time entertained the idea of translating the *Lusiads* himself, which statement is supported by the authority of Southey. Johnson was prevented from putting his idea into execution by the heavy literary work with which his hands were full, and it is said that he tried to persuade Goldsmith to undertake the task.

Mrs. Cockle has translated a *canção* and an elegy of Camões, both of which are reproduced in this work elsewhere.

Hayley has translated some sonnets of Camões, and in his *Essay on Epic Poetry* addressed some verses to our poet, the last of which are these :

Ye Nymphs of Tagus, from your golden cell,
That caught the echo of his tuneful shell,
Rise, and to deck your darling's shrine provide,
The richest treasures that the deep may hide :
From every land let grateful Commerce shower
Her tribute to the Bard who sung her power ;
As those rich gales, from whence his Gama caught
A pleasing earnest of the prize he sought,
The balmy fragrance of the East dispense,
So steals his song on the delighted sense,
Astonishing with sweets unknown before,
Those who ne'er tasted but of classic lore.
Immortal Bard ! thy name with Gama vies,
Thou, like thy Hero, with propitious skies
The sail of bold adventure hast unfurl'd,

And in the Epic Ocean found a world.
 'T was thine to blend the Eagle and the Dove,
 At once the Bard of Glory and of love :
 Thy thankless country heard thy varying lrye
 To Petrarch's softness melt, and swell to Homer's fire !
 Boast and lament, ungrateful Land, a name
 In life, in death, thy glory and thy shame.

John Adamson, who is certainly the most successful English biographer of our poet, published his *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Camões* in 1820 in two volumes, the first of which gives a full biography of the poet and the second an exhaustive account of the various translations of the *Lusiads* into different languages. He was appointed a member of the *Academia Real das Sciencias*, and subsequently, on the recommendation of Visconde de Almeida Garrett, the Order of Christ and Torre Espada was conferred on him.

Sir T. Livingston Mitchell has also translated the *Lusiads*, and in the preface to his work [says that the subject of the *Lusiads* is superior to that of the *Iliad*, *Æneid*, and *Paradise Lost*, and pays eloquent tribute to the heroism of the Portuguese race.

Edward Quillinan, being very much dissatisfied with the English translations of the *Lusiads*, undertook the task himself. Unfortunately he lived to complete only five cantos and died before accomplishing his work. This unfinished translation of the *Lusiads* was published in 1853 and received by critics with words of unqualified praise.

Sir Peter Wiche in his *Life of Don John de Castro* speaks of the well-known apparition of Christ during the historic battle of Ourique, quotes from the *Lusiads* verses that allude to this apparition, and says that Camões is the Virgil of Portugal.

Milton, who knew Spanish well, is believed to have read the *Lusiads*, to which his attention was probably drawn by the beautiful sonnet dedicated to Camões by Tasso, whom Milton so much admired.

James Murphy in his *Travels in Portugal* has described the tomb of Dom Pedro I and Dona Ignez de Castro at Alcobaça and translated from the *Lusiads* the most pathetic episode of Dona Ignez de Castro.

Byron, who in his *Childe Harold* has so gratuitously characterised the Portuguese as "a nation [swoln with ignorance and pride," was a sincere lover and admirer of Camões. He read not only the *Lusiads* but also the lyrical compositions of our poet, which is clearly proved by the verses he dedicated to a lady, to whom he sent a copy of the works of Camões. The verses in question are these :

This votive pledge of fond esteem,
Perhaps, dear girl ! for me thou'lt prize ;
It sings of Love's enchanting dream,
A theme we never can despise.

Who blames it but the envious fool,
The old and disappointed maid ;
Or pupil of the prudish school,
In single sorrow doom'd to fade ?

Then read, dear girl ! with feeling read,
For thou wilt ne'er be one of those ;
To thee, in vain, I shall not plead
In pity for the poet's woes.

He was in sooth a genuine bard :
His was no faint, fictitious flame :
Like his, may love be thy reward,
But not thy hapless fate the same.

John Black in his *Life of Tasso* compares the fate of Camões with that of the Italian bard and says: "Both poets, however, if their lives were wretched, have at least attained that fame for which they sighed; and it is a pleasing reflection that while the proud and titled grandees, who neglected the Lusitanian Bard, are forgotten or despised, his name is pronounced with respect even amidst the outrages of violence and the storms of war."

Southey contributed a lengthy article to one of the numbers of the *Quarterly Review* of the year 1822, in which he appreciated the work of John Adamson on Camões, gave a sketch of the life of our poet, analysed the *Lusiads*, and criticised the translations of Fanshaw and Mickle. Southey has also translated a few sonnets of Camões. In the article above referred to Southey writes: "In every language there is a magic of words as untranslatable as the sesame in the Arabian Tale—you may retain the meaning, but if the words be changed, the spell is lost. The magic has its effect only upon those to whom the language is as familiar as their mother tongue, hardly indeed upon any but those to whom it is really such. Camões possesses it in perfection; it is his peculiar excellence."

Henry Hallam in his *Introduction to the Literature of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* says in the course of his appreciation of Camões: "But in Portugal there had arisen a poet in comparison of whose glory that of Ercilla is nothing. The name of Camões has truly an European reputation, but the *Lusiads* is written in a language not generally familiar. From Portuguese critics it would be unreasonable to demand want of prejudice in favour of a poet so illustrious, and of a poem so peculiarly national. The *Æneid* reflects the glory of Rome as from a mirror; the *Lusiads* is directly and exclusively what its name "The Portuguese" (*Os Lusíadas*) denotes, the praise of the Lusitanian people. Their past history chimes in by means

of episodes, with the great event of Gama's voyage to India..... As the mirror of a heart so full of love, courage, generosity, and patriotism, as that of Camões, the *Lusiads* can never fail to please us, whatever place we may assign to it in the records of poetical genius."

Sir Andrew Ljungsted in his *Historical Sketch of the Portuguese Settlements in China* makes a reference to the grotto of Camões at Macau, and in an appendix reproduces the Latin verses dedicated by Davis to the grotto.

G. N. Wright in one of his works describes the grotto of Camões and gives a sketch of our poet's life.

Sir Richard Francis Burton, the famous traveller and the author of *Goa and the Blue Mountains*, has translated the *Lusiads* and the lyrics of Camões, the former in two volumes and the latter in one ; and he has also written a separate work on "The Life of Camões" in two volumes. Sir Richard has in the following lines paid respectful homage to Camões, whom he looked upon as his Master :

Enroll'd by thy pen, what marvellous band,
Of godlike Forms thy golden pages fill.
Love, Honour, Justice, Valour, Glory, thrill,
The soul obedient to thy strong command.

A biographer of Sir Richard Francis Burton, referring to the latter's translation of the *Lusiads*, writes: "Much time was devoted to a translation of the *Lusiads*, followed up by a Life of Camões and a Commentary,

'Englished by Richard Burton, and well done,
As it was well worth doing,'

Said Gerald Massey. And certainly this man was equal to the task. None but a traveller can do justice to a traveller, and it so happened that most of his wanderings formed a running and realistic commentary on the *Lusiads*. He had not only

visited almost every place in the "Epos of Commerce," but in many he had spent months, and even years. Only they, who have personally studied the originals of the word-pictures of Portugal's greatest singer, can appreciate the perfect combination of fidelity and realism with fancy and idealism. And another of our translator's qualifications was his thorough appreciation of the poem combined with ardent admiration for the poet. The gracious and noble thoughts of the *Lusiads* revived him as the champagne air of the mountain tops; and the soldier writer, whose motto was 'Honour, not Honours,' commanded the warmest sympathy of one, whose life bore a strange resemblance to that of Portugal's noble and unfortunate son."

John James Aubertin was a great admirer of Camões and has translated the *Lusiads* into English. Burton and Aubertin were great friends, and they delighted to walk together and talk about the "beloved Master," while each communicated to the other his intention of translating the *Lusiads* into English.

Dr. J. Leyden has translated the following sonnet dedicated by J. N. de Mattos to Camões :

Camões, o'er thy bright immortal lays
Of mournful elegy or lyric song,
How fleetly glide the rapid hours along!
I give to thee my nights, to thee my days.
The harms of fortune and the woes of love,
The changes of thy destiny severe
I mark with sadly sympathetic tear,
And can but sigh for what was thine to prove.
For thee mine eyes with bursting tears overflow,
Majestic Poet ! whose undaunted soul
Brav'd the ill-omen'd stars of either Pole,
And found in other climes but change of woe.
What Bard of fickle fortune dare complain,
Who knows thy fate, and high immortal strain !



